Commentary
May 1997

Could We Fight a War If We Had To?

Frederick W. Kagan & David T. Fautua

Arafat and the Uses of Terror
Jonathan Torop

For the Love of Country
Gertrude Himmelfarb

All-City Adolescent—A Story
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The Price of Managed Care
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What Happened to "Scientific American"
Jeremy Bernstein

The Anti-Modern Modernist
Terry Teachout

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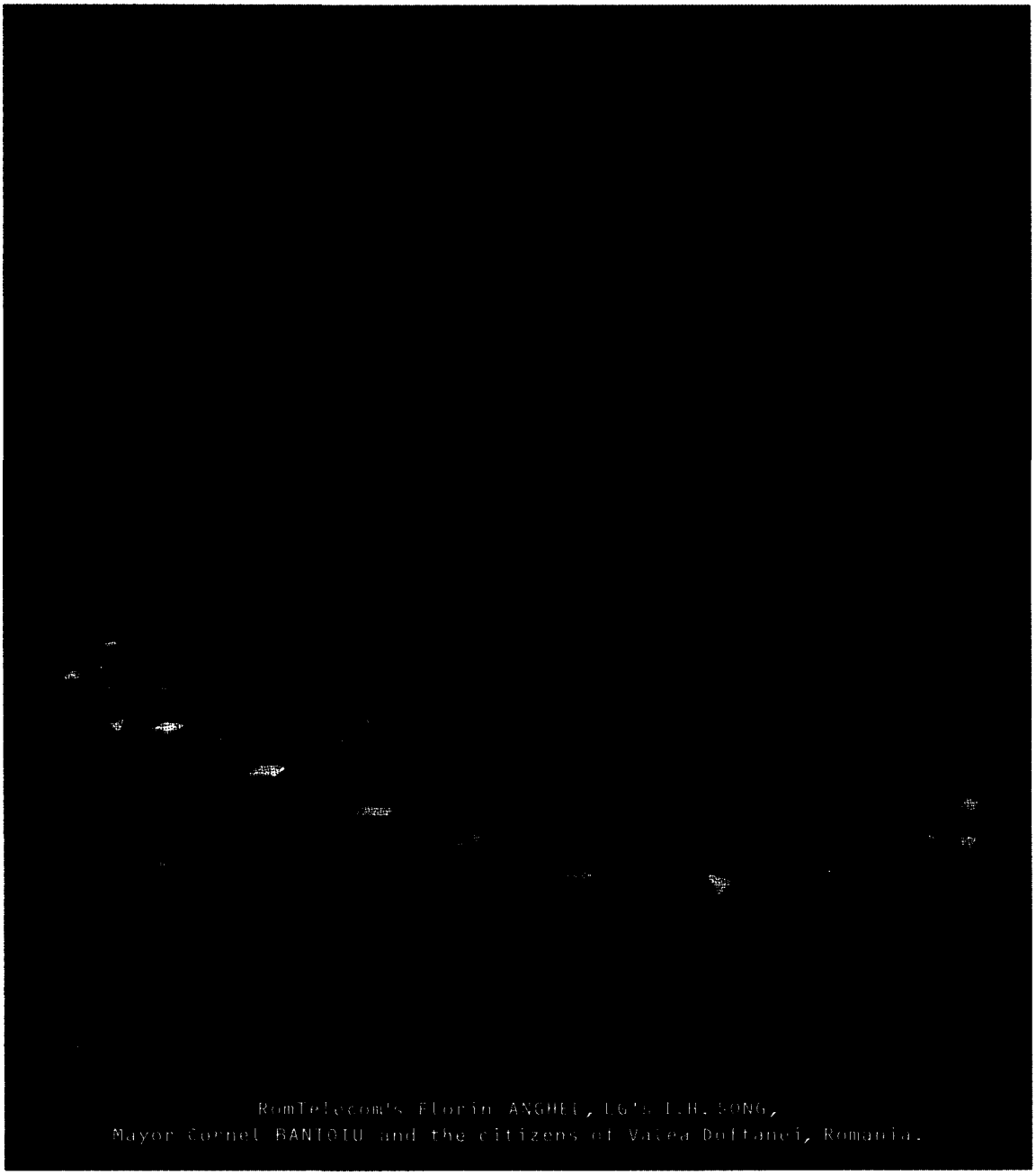

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Letters from Readers

The Future of Conservatism

To the Editor:

Responding to your symposium, "On the Future of Conservatism" [February], I would like, first, to suggest that the mixed results of the November 1996 election were due to the fact that the electorate realizes that both political parties are dominated by people far from the political mainstream. The voters want each party to restrain the ideological excesses of the other.

Among the Democrats are those who would like the government to eliminate poverty and racial inequality. These seem like laudable goals. Unfortunately, they cannot be achieved. Moreover, they cannot even be approximated without the intervention of a government that is more intrusive and expensive than most Americans—certainly most white Americans—desire.

On the Republican side we find people who would like to turn back the calendar on social issues, economic issues, or both, to the 50's, the 20's, or even the 19th century. But the basic reforms of the Progressive era, the New Deal—minus welfare—and the Medicare and environmental legislation of the 60's and 70's have broad popular support. Any efforts by the GOP to dismantle them will provoke a backlash in the next election. This is what happened between the elections of 1994 and 1996

In addition, while Americans are squeamish about abortion, and would probably support additional restrictions, most oppose an absolute ban, and opinion is not shifting on this issue. Finally, while most Americans feel that homosexuality is not very nice, most also acknowledge that homosexuals tend to obey the law and pay their own way.

If conservatism has a mandate in the near future it is to save the country from President Clinton's more harebrained schemes and to continue attacking liberals where they are most vulnerable—that is to say, on the issues of crime, welfare, affirmative action, illegal immigration, and busing.

John Engelman
Walnut Creek, California

To the Editor:

It would be well for conservatives to study and then restudy President Dwight D. Eisenhower's State of the Union message of February 2, 1953, a portion of which reads:

> There is in our affairs at home a middle way between untrammeled freedom of the individual and the demands for the welfare of the whole nation. This way must avoid government by bureaucracy as carefully as it avoids neglect of the helpless.

Eisenhower's tone is moderately conservative, or one might even say progressively Republican. Lincoln would have been at home with it. But most if not all conservatives today were in favor of the 1994 Gingrich counterrevolution which turned so extremist (shutting down the government twice) that it led to the reelection of Bill Clinton.

This may be mid-90's conservatism, but it is not true Republicanism. Republicans would do well to follow Eisenhower's advice, and take the middle way.

Moses M. Twersky
Providence, Rhode Island

To the Editor:

This physicist and engineer, an optimistic, progressive conservative in the tradition of the most popular Republican president of all time, Theodore Roosevelt, is not at all dismayed by the inflammatory rhetoric the editor of *First Things*, Father Richard John Neuhaus, used in his introduction to "The End of Democracy?" symposium in that magazine's November 1996 issue. For, as Walter Berns

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points out in the COMMENTARY symposium, all conservatives, not just those who wrote in *First Things*, are outraged by the arrogance of the Supreme Court in such cases as *Weber* (1979), in which the Court knowingly and willfully misread the plain, blunt language of the Civil Right Acts of 1964 in order to support racist preferences.

In fact, history reveals that the Supreme Court has often been arrogant and wrong. Besides the notorious *Dred Scott* decision, and the many other infamous decisions regarding the rights of black citizens, such as the *Civil Rights Cases* (1883) and *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* (1896), there are the shocking *Lochner* decision (1905) and the outrageous declaration by the Court in 1918 that the child-labor law was unconstitutional. But still, the Court *has* changed with time and the nation has prospered.

As concern for public morality and religious thought returns to the debate in the "public square," and the free-enterprise/private-property model grows and succeeds all around the world, there is every reason to believe that the Republican party can again win the presidency. A Republican following in the path of Ronald Reagan, Dwight Eisenhower, and Theodore Roosevelt, taking pride in America, its power and its ideals, can lead the party to victory.

HOWARD D. GREYBER
Potomac, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

As a fairly regular (though mostly apolitical) contributor to *First Things* and a sometime correspondent in these columns, I feel constrained to add my two-cents' worth on the recent kerfuffle provoked by the now-notorious November symposium in *First Things*. Yet I also feel oddly reluctant to join in, as I do not want to do anything to contribute further to a rift between these two estimable journals. But on reflection, I do not think there is any danger of that, for without fail the contributors to COMMENTARY's symposium spoke with the shrewdness, intelligence, and civility that is not only the mark of its pages but will, I hope, bode well for healing this temporary rift.

As for my two cents' worth: to judge by *First Things*' rhetoric and by later reactions, I cannot help feeling that there are two ghosts (one for each penny?) lurking in the closet of this debate. Let me guess that what the critics of Father Richard John Neuhaus most fear in his untoward language of "regime," "legitimacy," "revolution," etc. is Oklahoma City. But what he and the other editors of *First Things* must have had in mind, I hypothesize, is the ghost of a new Supreme Court decision establishing a "right" to die, a decision which, if handed down, would indeed unleash a crisis of confidence in our polity of unprecedented proportions.

I mostly agree with all those participants who find fault with the murky logic and dark foreboding tone of Neuhaus's introduction to his November symposium. I found Gertrude Himmelfarb's exegesis especially perceptive. But I regret, even deplore, what I regard as the rash step of Walter Berns, Peter L. Berger, and Miss Himmelfarb in resigning from the editorial board of *First Things*. Much more considered, I think, was Midge Decter's measured and warmly affectionate (not to mention loyal) response. I sometimes joke with my friends, but only half-facetiously, that the only reason I do not regard the judgments of Midge Decter as *per se* infallible is that my Roman Catholic faith requires that I acknowledge this particular charisma as belonging to the See of Rome. But surely in her response to the *First Things* imbroglio she is right once again; a little patience, please!

Nevertheless, I personally look for good coming out of this. The whole controversy has at least highlighted the need for bringing into the foreground the essential moral consensus that is the prerequisite for political consensus. I think William Kristol, George Weigel, and Ruth R. Wisse are much closer to the truth than some of the other contributors in realizing how much rides on being very clear on exactly what is at stake in the abortion issue. To lapse into a vaguely thought-out libertarianism on social morality in the manner of twentysomething Internet junkies will only undermine, as Mr. Weigel so rightly asserts, the very foundations of the economic order so dear to the libertarian heart.

And I say this fully cognizant of the legitimate (that word again!) discrepancy that can exist between a moral judgment on abortion and its legal status. The difficulty in resolving that crux rests in the peculiar nature of the act of procuring abortion, especially against the background of American jurisprudence: in my opinion, it shares in about equal measure features of Abolitionism and Prohibition. On the one hand, we have a Supreme Court decision that has declared that in effect the fetus is a non-person, offering uncomfortable parallels with the *Dred Scott* decision; on the other hand, any attempt to ban the practice in law would lead to a considerable flouting of the law, given the relatively private nature of the operation, whereas denying personhood to black slaves was a persistent public act of ongoing degradation that required an endless series of legal supports and sanctions.

It is for that reason that I, for one, would not support a Human Life Amendment if it were ever to become a viable political option—on what I take to be the very good Thomistic ground of the law's inherent unenforceability. I have never expressed such an opinion in public before because it has seemed to me that the chance of passing the amendment is next to nil.

However, I also think that we cannot afford to indulge in a live-and-let-live terminological insouciance about the nature of the incipient human being growing in the womb, for that road *does* lead to a moral agnosticism that makes the libertarian option inevitable.

As a Roman Catholic, I always get annoyed when people attribute my judgment on the immorality of abortion to my faith, for at least as far as I can judge my own convictions, it rests on perfectly obvious biological facts, the most important of which is the essential continuity of life—the inter-

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ruption of which is the very definition of death and the *deliberate* interruption of which is the very definition of killing.

In conclusion, I join most of the COMMENTARY contributors in their judgment that the *First Things* editorial introducing the five articles on judicial usurpation of politics was carelessly phrased, but I also think it possible to overreact in the other direction.

EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J.
Denver, Colorado

TO THE EDITOR:

Those who prefer the liberal-conservative wars to be fought on the social and political hustings can only look with dismay at the furor over the *First Things* symposium. What really happened? *First Things* writers reacted intemperately to the unquestioned excesses of the Supreme Court and seemed to be advocating rather far-fetched tactics to remedy the situation. One might have expected some in the conservative camp to point this out, while still recognizing they were dealing with friends and natural allies. But what is surprising, and troubling, is that many of our leading conservatives attacked Father Richard John Neuhaus in the harshest of terms and some who had been on the magazine's board resigned.

Yes, Neuhaus and company said that our government was "morally illegitimate" and declared that they were no longer able to give "moral assent to the existing regime." Clearly, however, they are some distance from spearheading a revolution in our democratic system. Moreover, in a subsequent issue, Neuhaus "clarified" the magazine's position and adopted a more moderate tone.

Of course, those on the Left pounced on this controversy, less because they took issue with *First Things*' overkill than in an effort to wound and divide conservatives, whose views they know have found increasing acceptance among many, if not most, Americans.

It seems that in acting the way they did, many leading conservatives fell into the trap the Left had set for them. But I would remind these people that if they want to find real villains on the Right, they should remember that waiting in the wings are Patrick J. Buchanan and other paleoconservatives with isolationist and anti-Semitic baggage readying themselves for the next national election.

What is necessary, as Norman Podhoretz points out, is "to fight to roll back the imperial judiciary while striving to work out the details of a more humane alternative to the social and political depredations of the liberal ethos."

MURRAY FRIEDMAN
Cheltenham, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

The ironies surrounding your recent symposium abound. Writing in *National Review* two years ago, Father Richard John Neuhaus objected to *The Bell Curve* by Charles Murray and the late Richard J. Herrnstein on the grounds that some matters are best passed over in silence. Now, some of those who defended *The Bell Curve* have come down hard on Neuhaus for providing a public forum for delicate matters.

The natural-law tradition offers a secular, philosophical perspective that happens to have been most fully developed among Roman Catholics. It is not a theological doctrine, except in the attenuated sense that it may require a certain metaphysical perspective, namely, that there is an order to the cosmos that implies a teleology of human development and activity. From such a perspective, it is possible to derive norms through which we may judge the propriety of human actions, including those of government. In other words, when we apply the natural-law tradition, precisely what we do is judge regimes and laws. Why, then, the scandal?

It may be objected that the tone of the symposium in *First Things* was alarmist. I myself, a neoconservative of the younger generation, dislike and disagree with "doom-and-gloom" conservatism. But I have another concern. The conservative coalition is not indestructible. As it stands, neoconservatives and Buchananites can barely manage civility. It is not helpful for prominent neoconservatives to anathematize those who only recently were their friends. That style of argument smacks of political correctness and the enforcement of discipline rather than principled disagreement.

Indeed, it seems to me that we must generally guard against a style of cultural criticism which is too eager to react, and instead affirm the value of reflection and the appreciation of nuance. Of course, critics must criticize, but censoriousness is no substitute for careful analysis and reasoned response.

MICHAEL DAVID BLUME
Annapolis, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

I found troubling one aspect of the discussion in your symposium: the attempt by some participants to reduce the initial broad charge of judicial usurpation to one concerning abortion alone.

The issue was put most sharply by Peter L. Berger in his customary concise fashion:

> Imagine that abortion in the United States had achieved its present legal status through an act of Congress rather than a Supreme Court decision. Imagine further that the Supreme Court had then ruled this act to be unconstitutional. I doubt very much that most of the *First Things* contributors would have viewed the latter action as a serious usurpation of power, let alone a reason to question the legitimacy of the American polity.

I believe Mr. Berger's example obscures more than it illuminates the issue.

Consider: in case A (which is what actually took place), the Court, in legalizing abortion, overturned not only the laws of many states but also a moral tradition of long standing in the West, still supported by many citizens. And it based its decision on a reading of the Constitution that many citizens find vaporous and unconvincing. This was an egregious act of judicial usurpation.

In case B (the Berger projection), the Court's decision would be consonant with a long-standing moral tradition and, more importantly, it would be based on a reading of the Constitution that could be firmly grounded—one that

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provides for the protection of human life at a most vulnerable stage. In this instance, the Court would be acting in accordance with, not in contradiction to, our system of checks and balances. No judicial usurpation would be involved.

Without diminishing the importance of abortion in the present debate over judicial activism, it is well to recognize that it is only one of many issues in the larger context of examining how religiously and morally informed opinions of the body politic properly help shape public policy.

JAMES FINN
Puebla Institute
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

I have been a reader of COMMENTARY since 1984. I am a dyed-in-the-wool Protestant of the Augustinian and Calvinist school, which, I suppose, classifies me as poor, illiterate, and uneducated. (Unfortunately, to the first of these I must admit, though the remainder I emphatically deny.) That said, I must, respectfully, enter a negative opinion on COMMENTARY's latest symposium.

It seems to me the main difference between the contributors to the COMMENTARY symposium and the participants in the *First Things* symposium is to what degree each believes in the existence of God, His precepts, and His relevance to the day-by-day working-out of history. True, the *First Things* symposium was predominantly about the judicial usurpation of democracy, but it was strongly undergirded with the propositions and precepts of God. And I sense that it is this "throwing of God into the mix" that is a thorn in the side of the writers in COMMENTARY. Not that they do not believe in God—heaven forbid I should make such a charge—but I sense that they do not see God in the same way as those in *First Things*, and particularly, not the way the Founders saw Him.

In the Founders' eyes the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights were not absolutes. Was what they did and what they wrote *right*; how near to the truth and to God's will did they come, relative to what they were trying to accomplish? These things were the absolutes. And this is also the position of *First Things*. To think it wants in some way to bring America down and bring chaos down on all our heads is unbelievable. The critics completely misread Father Richard John Neuhaus's intent and purpose; what he really wants is simply a return to the principles and ideas that were part and parcel of the original Constitution.

We are still the mightiest nation on the face of the earth, economically and militarily. Our freedom and opportunities still far exceed those of any other nation. But what made us a shining light upon a hill is fading. We were great once, now we are only mighty.

If the transcendent power behind the Constitution which gave it legitimacy is no longer adhered to, then what we have today is not the Constitution drafted by the Founders. That is the cry of *First Things*: go back, go back, and seek the things that made us great in the beginning, make them real again, and we shall see our greatness return.

EDDIE MACCAUSLAND
Ocala, Florida

TO THE EDITOR:

The conservative movement, or counterrevolution, that has won majority support, particularly in the two victories of Ronald Reagan, was not based on a repudiation of the 60-year efforts of the federal government to create greater equality for

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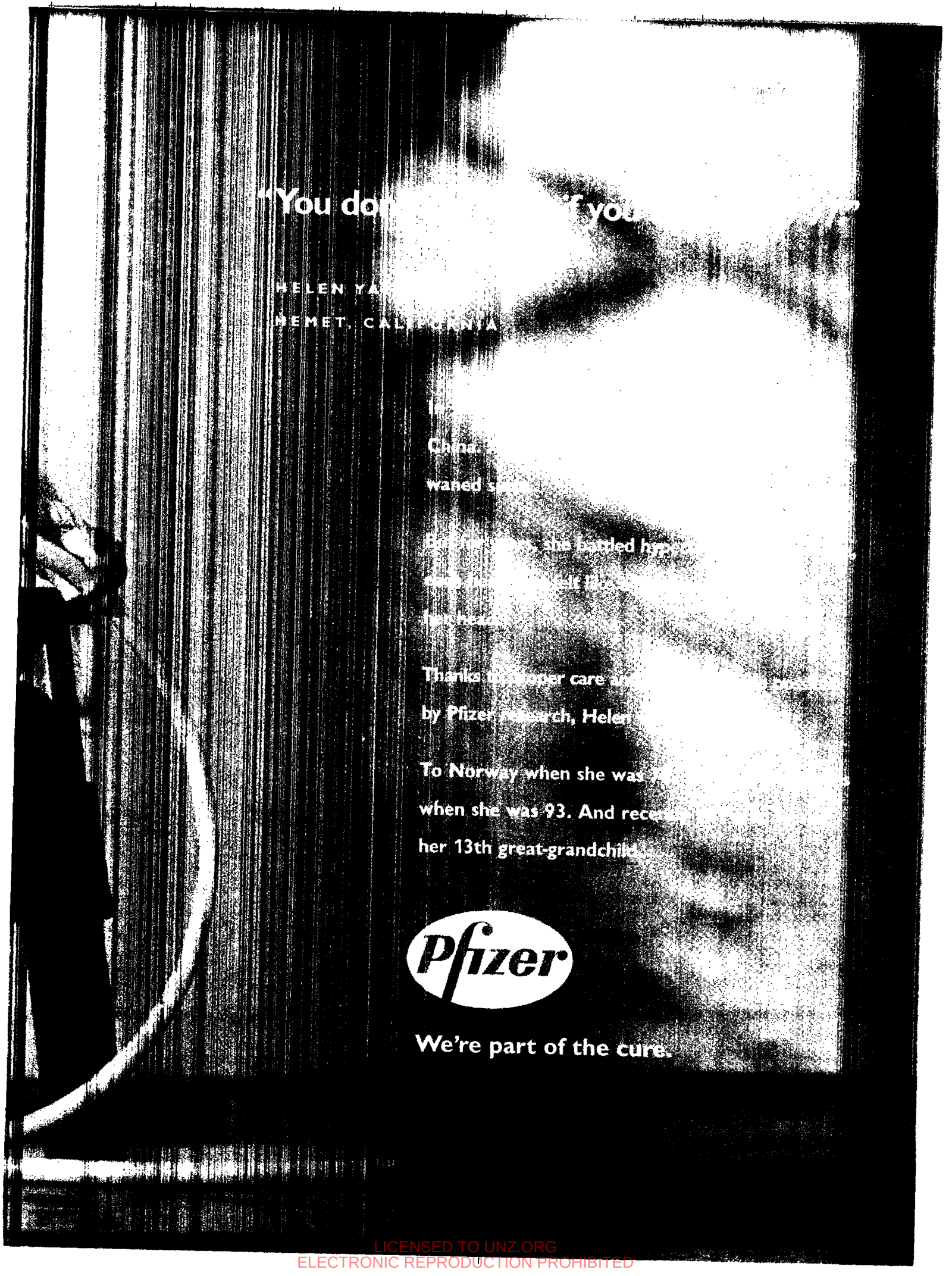

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all, socially and economically, but on anger toward a few recent policies that seemed to threaten basic values held by most Democrats as well as by Republicans. These policies included expanding welfare programs which helped to keep people *out* of the mainstream; reverse discrimination; judicial usurpation of legislative functions that resulted in placing the rights of criminals above the rights of their victims; and a political correctness in our colleges that assumed the values of the vast majority of people to be inferior to the values of radical feminists, Afrocentrists, and various new-Marxists.

To see what is actually taking place in the minds of the majority of people, conservatives will not only have to get over their visceral hatred of President Clinton but learn to imitate him in recognizing that the distortions of and anti-American accretions to traditional liberalism can be eliminated only if we assure people that the basic values underlying the democratic revolution will be maintained. Thus, we can drastically reform welfare programs only by also providing jobs and training to millions more than we do now, and reverse discrimination by doing more to end traditional discrimination, etc.

The leader of this kind of intelligent conservatism right now is President Clinton, but, admittedly, his leadership is equivocal and uncertain. Thus there is wide opportunity for others. But conservative leadership will come about only if conservatives give up their nostalgia for an imagined past and accept the fact that to hold onto what is best in our past requires change, just as intelligent change requires a sense of continuity with the past.

LAWRENCE HYMAN
Ridgewood, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

Most of your symposium on the future of conservatism shows why conservatism neither has nor deserves a future. With the exception of David Frum, the contributors do not even understand the major issues confronting America. This is not some erudite debate about Catholics and Jews in an esoteric magazine, it is about the fate of average citizens.

Does anyone among the conservatives care that 40 million Americans are without health insurance? Can they imagine what desperation parents must feel when their child is sick and they have no health insurance? When an adult fears a serious illness? Clinton's proposal for national health insurance had defects, but it was a serious attempt to solve a problem of fundamental importance. Republican opposition was clever, but showed no interest in solving the underlying problem; its triumph was the triumph of evil. And to refer, as Irwin M. Stelzer does, to the Family and Medical Leave Act as giving time off "to take the cat to the vet" demonstrates the complete lack of sympathy for the problems of real people that characterizes today's conservatives.

The rigid anti-abortion position of most of the contributors is extreme and out of touch with most Americans, even members of the class that writes these hardline essays. For example, most American women at risk of bearing a damaged fetus have amniocentesis, and no doubt this includes conservative women as well. In the self-righteous posturing about abortion from Republican stalwarts trying to ingratiate themselves with religious fanatics, I have seen nothing about the situation of a family which wants a child, but not one with serious defects whose care might ruin family life for all.

As a former neoconservative, now once again a liberal, I looked to your symposium to see if there were still some common ground between us. I favor requiring welfare mothers to work, and agree that the old welfare system caused disaster by destroying the incentive of many to marry or to work. But we should not go to the extreme of putting legal immigrants who are patients in nursing homes on the street when their five years are up. I will not accept having children sleep on grates because their mothers cannot find jobs that pay enough to cover child-care expenses. Raising the minimum wage was essential, as is the earned-income-tax credit, but both measures were opposed by the Republicans in Congress.

What have conservatives to offer to that part of the electorate which cares about the unfortunate, not only when they qualify for protection by Mark Helprin's standards by being unborn or facing death? I hear a lot of talk about charity, but the figures show that most of the rich are giving to their own institutions (e.g. universities, hospitals, and churches or synagogues), not to the needy and hungry. These uncharitable people are the same crowd which wants its taxes cut.

EDITH U. FIERST
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

It obviously does not fall to me, as associate editor of *First Things*, to answer the questions and complaints raised in your February issue; the writers published in the *First Things* November symposium on judicial usurpation are well able to defend themselves. But several of your contributors mention the inset historical quotations printed in *First Things*, and perhaps it does fall to me, as the person who found those quotations, to point out that they have been misread. The passages from William Lloyd Garrison, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Dietrich Bonhoeffer were intended to illustrate diverse opinions on the patriotic duty of citizens at a time of governmental immorality, ranging from Garrison's revolutionary outrage to Bonhoeffer's thoughtful observation of the enduring legitimacy of government. When Michael Novak, for instance, suggests that *First Things* might have printed passages from Bonhoeffer arguing *against* revolution, he is absolutely right—except that *First Things* already did, as a rereading of the printed quotations will show.

J. BOTTUM
First Things
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

The contributors to your symposium on the future of conservatism focused on the short term, about which on the whole they were pessimistic. Nevertheless, there are also grounds for rejoicing. The reason is that so-

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cialism is dead as an idea. It did not require theoretical refutation; Ludwig von Mises provided that long ago. But the fall of Communism, and the revelations that accompanied that fall, made untenable the redemptive fantasy by which modern liberals have sought to atone for their prosperity. Certainly, many liberals do not consider themselves socialists, but socialism has until now acted like a magnet attracting their thoughts.

Perhaps this does not appear to promise any improvement in the moral problems that seem unrelated to socialism. In their public-policy aspect, however, these problems are primarily ones of centralized power being imposed on local choices. And there is some reason to believe that the central-planning commitment essential to the socialist mind-set is what has created those intellectuals and jurists who insist that the people of a state should not be able, for example, to limit the special privileges granted to homosexuals, support single-sex military schools, or determine the terms on which they will permit abortion and suicide.

It is funny but true that material changes like the cell phone or the personal computer will spread like wildfire while outdated ideas take a generation to disappear into museums. The next few years are uncertain, but, like the American Revolution, the fall of Communism seems likely to determine the trend of intellectual fashion for some time to come.

MICHAEL J. LYNCH
Toledo, Ohio

Immigration

TO THE EDITOR:

In "Toward a New Immigration Policy" [January], Peter D. Salins writes that "whatever else our immigration policy has been recently, it has not been assimilationist, either in conception or in intent." If what he means by immigration policy is *immigrant* policy—the question of how we treat the foreign-born once they are here—then he is absolutely correct. Indeed, his allusions to the harmful effects of bilingual education, multicultural curricula, racial preferences, and welfare use are apt.

But what Mr. Salins really means is *admissions* policy—the question of whom we should admit in the first place. And in his call for a lottery-style immigration policy, his otherwise fine article goes slightly off-track. If Mr. Salins wants an admissions policy that smiles upon the likely acquisition of citizenship ("an unalloyed good," he rightly calls it), then abandoning skills and family reunification as two bases for admission may not be such a great idea.

We already have a fairly good understanding of who naturalizes, and why. The sociologist Philip Yang has offered statistical proof of what he calls the "reversibility hypothesis": the harder it is for immigrants to go back home, the more likely it is that they will become citizens here. Thus, immigrants who leave politically repressive countries with low standards of living and travel long distances to arrive in America are much more inclined to pursue citizenship than, say, Canadians (who, along with the Mexicans mentioned by Mr. Salins, are notoriously poor naturalizers). Allowing only certain national-origin groups to become citizens is not a morally or politically acceptable decision, however, so we must instead look to other characteristics when deciding whom to admit.

My own view is that admissions policy should move toward a point system that rewards certain attributes, such as possessing an important skill or having a close relation who is a U.S. citizen. As it happens, skills and family ties both correlate in favor of naturalization. They also drive much of our current admissions law. By moving toward a point system, however, we might also reward other factors, such as

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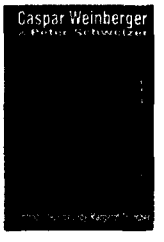

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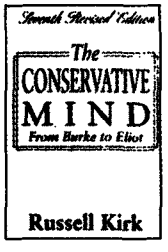

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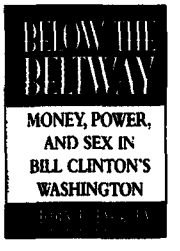

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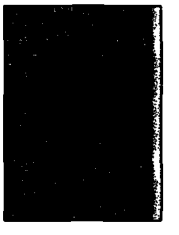

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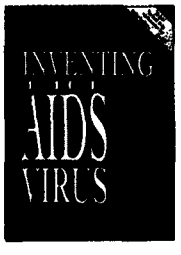

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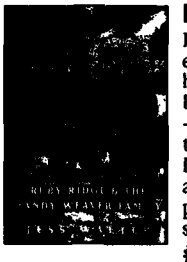

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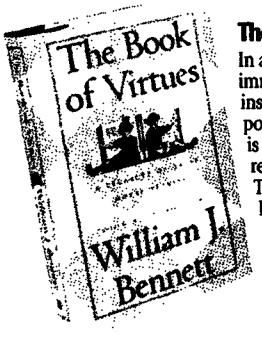

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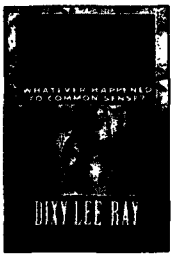

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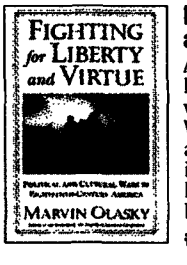

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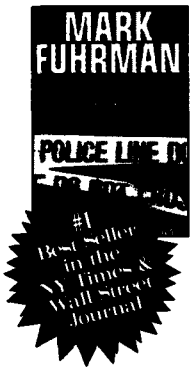

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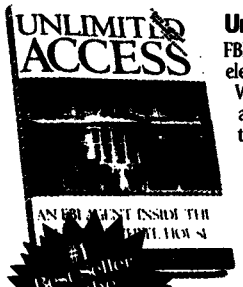

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youth or the ability to speak English. Studies have shown that both these qualities make naturalization more likely. But no matter how we choose, a random lottery would not necessarily increase immigrants' propensity to naturalize. We frankly do not know what it would do.

JOHN J. MILLER
Center for Equal Opportunity
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Immigration is an issue of labyrinthine complexity. Peter D. Salins's article is a thoughtful contribution to the ongoing discussion and debate on this issue. Clearly, immigrants have contributed enormously to America. But the underlying premise of the article is seriously flawed. Mr. Salins's last sentence reads as follows:

> Unless we devise a policy that keeps faith with those traditions [our newcomers' record of successful assimilation], we will continue willy-nilly to lend force to the arguments of the restrictionist minority, and to undermine the good faith and tolerance of the welcoming majority.

And toward the beginning of the article, he writes, "Most Americans do not have strong views on the issue at all." Yet a *Wall Street Journal*/NBC public-opinion poll, conducted in March 1996, found that 52 percent of all Americans favor a five-year ban on *all* immigration to the U.S. If these figures do not reflect "strong views," I wonder what does.

The fact is that this country is experiencing, once again, a powerful backlash against immigrants, fueled in large part by the widespread perception that our borders are out of control. There are now several million illegal aliens in this country, only about 1 percent of whom are deported annually.

For many people, illegal immigration is a kind of game: we try to keep you out, but if you can manage to sneak in, you win, you can stay. Admittedly, there is no quick fix for the problem posed by those who evade the Border Patrol, or who enter lawfully but then overstay their visas to remain here. But until we make much greater strides in stemming this ongoing flow, the backlash against lawful immigrants will persist and may even intensify. This is an issue almost made to order for right-wing, nativist extremists like Patrick J. Buchanan.

SAMUEL RABINOVE
White Plains, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Peter D. Salins's "Toward a New Immigration Policy" contains more good sense than one usually finds among defenders of high immigration. But while his acknowledgment of the anti-assimilationist slant of our current immigration policies is a refreshing change from the platitudes that are too common in this debate, Mr. Salins nevertheless falls short in his analysis of the problem and his prescriptions for change.

The need for assimilation is a by-product of immigration; i.e., it is the very admission of newcomers that triggers the need to Americanize them in the first place. This is true however one defines assimilation: linguistic, cultural, occupational, residential, political, or constitutional (through naturalization). The most pro-assimilation immigration policy, obviously, is one that admits no immigrants at all. Thus, Mr. Salins's contention that "numbers are not the issue" is precisely wrong; other things being equal, a larger number of immigrants is harder to assimilate than a smaller number, and a small enough number of immigrants renders other assimilation-related concerns irrelevant. This is why any consideration of assimilation cannot ignore the fact that immigration is at a record high of more than one million per year, or the fact that our total immigrant population is nearly 26 million, twice the 1910 level of 13 million.

What is more, Mr. Salins's suggestion that "the key objective of American policy should be to recruit immigrants who will rapidly and gladly assimilate" fails to answer a prior question: what is the rationale for admitting immigrants in the first place? There must be specific reasons, specific values to be served, with the promotion of assimilation as a subsidiary value—one necessary to negate the inevitably divisive consequences of immigration, but insufficient in itself as a reason for such immigration.

In struggling to articulate such a rationale, Mr. Salins points meaningfully to the Statue of Liberty, talks of revitalizing our civic culture, and avers that we would "cease to be America" if we stopped taking immigrants. As charming as this philosophy is, it begs the mundane question of how many people we should admit and how we should select them. In trying to frame a rationale for legal immigration, perhaps it would be more fitting, more conservative, to consider some modest, concrete national purposes, rather than looking to a grandiose National Purpose, as Mr. Salins suggests.

We need not look far. There are three such purposes or values that frame any immigration policy. First, family reasons. Mr. Salins correctly criticizes the nepotistic nature of current policy, which extends special immigration rights to a variety of adult relatives of U.S. citizens and legal residents, creating, as he says, an "ethnic spoils system." Limiting family immigration to the spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens would end the nepotism while still ensuring that American nuclear families are not split.

The second rationale for immigration is to attract the world's brightest talents who would otherwise be trapped in backward or statist societies (precisely the people, incidentally, who are most likely to naturalize, according to research by the Center for Immigration Studies). Regrettably, this segment of our immigration system has grown beyond its mandate; in addition to facilitating the admission of a handful of genuine Einsteins, it also allows certain industries to undercut the wages of American workers by importing a large number of decidedly-less-than-Einsteins. Cutting this category back two-thirds, to the Reagan-era level, while limiting it to the truly superior rather than the merely adequate, would go a long way toward fixing it.

The third purpose served by immigration is to provide refuge to those who have nowhere else to go.

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Here again, our refugee-resettlement program has become so corrupted as to have turned into a side-door for family immigration, while many who are truly deserving languish in camps overseas. Capping humanitarian immigration at 50,000, as Congress intended when it passed the Refugee Act of 1980, while admitting only authentic refugees genuinely in need of resettlement, would enable us to take in virtually *all* such people in the world who are identified by the United Nations.

Thus, a more careful look at the actual reasons for admitting immigrants yields a more pro-assimilation policy than anything Mr. Salins proposes—one which would cut legal immigration by half or more while still satisfying important national purposes.

MARK KRIKORIAN
Center for Immigration Studies
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

At the core of public discontent over immigration policy is that we admit nearly a million people a year through the legal-immigration process for reasons that are so ill-defined that no one can really make much sense of them. U.S. immigration policy may serve the interests of this particular ethnic group, or that particular industry. It obviously serves the interests of the immigrants themselves, or they would not come. But no one can convincingly explain to the American people how our immigration policy is making the United States a better, more prosperous, and more cohesive nation.

To achieve a rational immigration policy we have to understand what we as a nation (as opposed to individual interest groups) want and do not want. Do we want a population of half-a-billion people in the 21st century? Do we want unending chains of family-based immigration? Do we want only well-educated immigrants with a high likelihood of being economic assets, or are we prepared to make Santería animal sacrifices as American as Thanksgiving turkey? Until we answer these questions, we will never have a viable immigration policy.

To his credit, Mr. Salins does define some national interests in his blueprint for reforming U.S. immigration policy. He places himself firmly in the camp of those who believe that immigration should serve the nation's economic interests. If we accept this premise, we must ask the next obvious question: how many prospective immigrants fall into this category? Mr. Salins sees no problem with the admission of a million immigrants a year. However, he does not make the case that there are anywhere near that many people applying to come here whose skills and intellects are so exceptional that we ought to snap them up. In truth, the number of Albert Einsteins, An Wangs, and Madeleine Albrights is rather small. In his definition of an immigration policy that serves the national interest, 50,000 visas a year would probably cover all the computer engineers and rocket scientists who want to come here *and* their dependents.

Immigration policy should also take into account the quality of life and "psychic comfort" of people with less than six-figure incomes. For those with 100-acre vacation retreats, immigration-generated population growth might not be as big a concern as it is to those who wish to find a little peace and quiet in public parks and beaches. To people who live in exclusive, tightly-zoned suburbs, the linguistic and cultural transformation of neighborhoods may not seem like much of a threat. But this is not the case with people who belong to the working class; they are no less deserving of having their way of life protected.

Mr. Salins's ideas are a step in the right direction, but to develop an immigration policy that truly serves the national interest requires a much broader view than the one he offers.

IRA MEHLMAN
Federation for American Immigration Reform
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

As a Chinese immigrant and former senior immigration paralegal, I wish to respond to Peter D. Salins's article.

Mr. Salins, like Julian Simon and many other American "experts" on immigration, argues that immigrants "revitalize our neighborhoods." He too cites Miami and Los Angeles as examples of this proposition. Perhaps he does not know that both these cities face bankruptcy. In fact, the cost of rendering services to immigrants far exceeds any economic gain. In his book *The New Chinatown*, Peter Kwong of Hunter College has clearly demonstrated the adverse economic impact of mass immigration.

Furthermore, if current immigration rates continue, by the year 2050, the U.S. is likely to have grown from today's 266 million to over 500 million. Is this what we want for America?

Proponents of mass immigration must remember that today's high-tech economy requires fewer and fewer workers and, if it is to prosper, these workers must be highly skilled. If we want our welfare recipients and unemployed workers to find jobs, America must immediately cap all legal immigration at 100,000 a year for five years.

YEH LING-LING
Diversity Coalition for an Immigration Moratorium
San Francisco, California

TO THE EDITOR:

I agree with Peter D. Salins's observation about the general "failure to think clearly about our national purposes and how immigration can serve them." But I am afraid that his article is only a further illustration of this phenomenon.

In particular, Mr. Salins makes several policy recommendations that seem illogical and wrong-headed. For one thing, even if one shares his concern (as I do) about the balkanization of our society, his proposal that we promote greater geographic diversity among immigrants is hardly a promising solution to any problem other than that of stocking an ethnographic museum; it would hardly help to maintain a cohesive modern society. Already we see how some ethnic groups are bringing with them the problems of their native lands, as demonstrated most vividly in recent acts of Arab terrorism in the United States.

For another thing, Mr. Salins suggests that we dis-

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pense with our present policy of favoring those immigrants who possess special skills. But this would only serve to eliminate the single category that is incontrovertibly useful to our country. Many of those who form the glory of American culture and the backbone of American science would never have made it to our shores if we had followed this prescription in an earlier day.

Mr. Salins wants the U.S. to screen new immigrants for their "reasons for immigrating, their eagerness to be a part of the American way of life, and their appreciation of America's political institutions." Does this mean we should pass over, say, a physicist from Indonesia who wants a higher salary and greater professional opportunities in favor of a rickshaw driver from Somalia who expresses devotion to the separation of powers enshrined in our Constitution? By introducing what are arbitrary and subjective factors into the admissions decision, Mr. Salins's proposal is a recipe for establishing a screening process that would either become ideologically dangerous or bureaucratically corrupt or both.

Finally, Mr. Salins is heartened by the fact that many recent immigrants are applying for citizenship in record numbers in response to changes in the welfare laws. But this is precisely the category of residents that the U.S. should be discouraging, not encouraging. Except for the lure of welfare, these newcomers do not identify as Americans; but once given the vote, they will be in a position to shape our policies.

In the end, Mr. Salins's article accomplishes only one thing: it shows how genuinely difficult it is to formulate a sound immigration policy.

BORIS GULKO
Fairlawn, New Jersey

PETER D. SALINS writes:

The objections in these letters fall into two general categories: they are either based on a misreading (or too hasty a reading) of my piece, or they disagree with my predisposition in favor of large-scale immigration.

John J. Miller apparently agrees with me about the importance of assimilation and naturalization but quarrels with my view that an admissions process targeted at a wider spectrum of nationalities and those immigrants most eager to come to the U.S. could yield such benefits. I can only respond by noting that such a policy could hardly be less assimilationist than the present one which overwhelmingly favors one cohort of immigrants: those with relatives in the U.S.

In his concern that the lack of an effective means of stopping illegal immigration has generated a backlash against immigration in general, Samuel Rabinove seems to have missed the fact that in my article I was very firm in specifying that closing the door to illegal immigrants must be a cornerstone of American immigration policy.

While critics like Messrs. Miller and Rabinove might be persuaded by my arguments if they reread them (or heard me argue them in person), the other correspondents—Mark Krikorian, Ira Mehlman, Yeh Ling-Ling, and Boris Gulko—are beyond the reach of any argument that I could make because they reject my fundamental premise: that immigration is an intrinsic component of our national civic compact, and not just a way of filling temporary gaps in our labor force. One either believes in immigration or one does not. Just as there is no way to "prove" that our society benefits from the Bill of Rights, there is no way to "prove" that it benefits from immigration. These two features of our national civic design happen, however, to share a common political and philosophical basis and I believe that they are hardwired into the civic psyche

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of most Americans, regardless of how they may respond to pollsters. If one does not accept the validity of immigration, there is no point in arguing about whom or even how many we should admit. There is no "designer-demographics" format that will assure us that any particular categorical mix of immigrants is more "beneficial" than any other. Nor are my specific recommendations regarding both the number and mix of immigrants intended to be taken as yet another entry in the designer-demographics debate. I merely attempted to lay out a format for immigration policy that might, just possibly, yield an immigrant stream more like the one the U.S. had during the era of unrestricted immigration in the hopes that such a format could foster greater assimilation.

Feminism

TO THE EDITOR:

I read Elizabeth Powers's "A Farewell to Feminism" [January] hoping the author would help me to understand my own increasing sense of separation from the modern women's movement. However, many of her criticisms are familiar and easily discredited: that feminism is against marriage and child-rearing, a supposition without any more substantiation here than elsewhere; that anger is a defining and discrediting attribute of most writing by avowed feminists, here supported by a single example, a book published a quarter of a century ago (Ingrid Bengis's *Combat in the Erogenous Zone*); and that women who choose to work are somehow denatured through their "abandonment of the female realm," without attempting to define what that realm might be and how it may have changed, or revealing the author's own choices in the matter.

It is too easy for Elizabeth Powers to label nameless women as caring little or nothing about marriage and children, to imagine that "most of these women have probably not dwelt on the consequence of the Faustian bargain they have struck" while avoiding mention of her own surely Faustian bargain as an intelligent woman of some ambition who seeks to write and publish as well as (I assume) to have some sort of personal life.

Defenses of or attacks on feminism seem to cloud the minds of those who write them; this is, and always has been, a hot emotional topic. However, whether we are attackers or defenders of feminism, I do not believe we should continue to excuse our lack of rigor because (as the women's movement may have persuaded us) we put faith in our subjective reaction to the topic, then shored it up with dubious research. For example, to state, as Elizabeth Powers does, that "Young males . . . will only be protective and caring of females when something is at stake," without providing attribution for such a sweeping statement, is to use a quasi-scientific tone to support something that is, patently, unproved. Are we talking about young gorillas?

Because the issues raised here are important, I was disappointed to find the attack so threadbare. Feminism deserves more potent criticism.

SALLIE BINGHAM
Santa Fe, New Mexico

TO THE EDITOR:

I read Elizabeth Powers's "A Farewell to Feminism" with great interest. Her essential point—that in embracing sexual freedom, women of the movement did not intend, or even expect, men to embrace it to the point where they would lose a sense of responsibility to the children they fathered—is well taken. I believe current feminist thinking agrees with her assessment of the early feminist movement as somewhat elitist. But her fear of state-controlled child care is itself somewhat elitist if one considers how expensive, and therefore out of reach to poorer families, high-quality private child care is. Does she have the same fear about the state pouring money into building new prisons? Look at the prison population, examine its socioeconomic origins, and ask whether we all might have benefited had the state put more money into attending to the early-childhood needs of that population.

Elizabeth Powers went to college ten years before I did, and by the time I went, we young women had already internalized many of the issues of the women's movement. We viewed equality as our right, not as a novelty, not as something we had to burn our bras over. We even thought that the feminists she talks about were somewhat shrill. Our attitude was: "We get it. Now let's get to work." Meaning: let's get jobs just like the ones men have. We had not yet confronted the realities of glass ceilings and mommy tracks and unequal pay and the pull of motherhood.

Perhaps for Elizabeth Powers the disjunction came about because of the feminist "belief in the inevitable progress of humanity." When one's involvement in a movement is based on a fallacy like that, one is bound to be disappointed. I think much of her piece is about feeling betrayed by people she respected and looked up to who did not help her find a clear path through life.

ANNE RITTENBERG
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Elizabeth Powers invokes Aristotle's position that we have a goal toward which we strive, but Aristotle never suggested that marriage was the necessary relationship in that quest; rather, for Aristotle, it was friendship.

As Henry James saw quite clearly, modern romantics make a mistake when they burden marriage with a romanticization of the spiritual fulfillment it can offer to the exclusion of other kinds of spiritual fulfillment. Elizabeth Powers might have cut out the long, somewhat pointless autobiographical parts of her essay and instead offered a more pertinent reflection on the different ways human beings can strive toward Aristotle's goal. She might have remembered that James, whom she seems to admire, made the opening line of *The Ambassadors*, "Strether's first question, when he reached the hotel, was about his friend."

ANNE D. HALL
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

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TO THE EDITOR:

As Elizabeth Powers observes so astutely, the feminist mandate that led women to insist upon sexual and economic autonomy was a Faustian bargain. While it enabled many women coming of age in the 70's to obtain professional degrees and corner offices, it also left many of those women unmarried and panicked about their biological clocks. Sadly enough, as the author implies, this was a generational tragedy born of 60's idealism, a response to the 50's housewives by daughters who sought to avoid what they saw as their mothers' plight by sacrificing their own feminine needs on the altar of autonomy.

Still, there was another group of women just coming of age in the late 60's and early 70's who trusted in traditional heterosexual love and the implicit protections it afforded females. For these sophisticated and largely urban or suburban women, devotion to their husbands and children, to the creation of a home and its comforts, remained their first priority. Once the children were grown, in college, or out on their own, these women anticipated entering the labor force. In contrast to their single and childless feminist sisters, they believed they were ultimately fulfilled—until the specter of divorce arrived in midlife, and left them shaken, financially, economically, and spiritually.

As anyone knows who has experienced divorce after a long marriage, the backlash against the women's movement often enables the divorce courts to consider former wives in their middle years as capable of climbing up the corporate or professional career ladder as nimbly as women in their late twenties do today. But few women who bought that idealistic dream of traditional love and marriage in the 60's or 70's are that sprightly.

And what about the "spiritual wholeness" that Elizabeth Powers praises as part of the traditional women's contributions to the home? Few women reject or deny its ability to soothe and cheer family members at each stage in the life-cycle. But spiritual serenity, for all its importance and incandescence, has no cash value. Nor can it be used as collateral, even for a phone deposit for a suddenly single woman's new apartment.

To protect their sanity, the women who have lavished love and devotion upon their husbands and children and put their own career potential on the back burner often come to understand that their efforts were born out of their most profound needs. As such, the spiritual serenity that they imparted to others must simultaneously be respected and regarded in a clear-eyed way as part of the perilous risk every woman takes in loving another.

NANCY RUBIN
Larchmont, New York

ELIZABETH POWERS writes:

It is frustrating to be admonished for what one did not set out to do. Since the motto of the women's movement is "the personal is the political," should I not be cut some slack for having written a personal memoir rather than a critique of feminism *per se*? In any event, in my thinking on this subject I have come to see the emancipation of women as an aspect of a vast process of secularization; to write a critique of *that* process would be an even vaster undertaking. What concerned me instead in my essay were the personal effects on a generation of unmarried women of the ideology that came into being in the late 1960's and early 1970's: "feminism."

I would be curious to know more about Sallie

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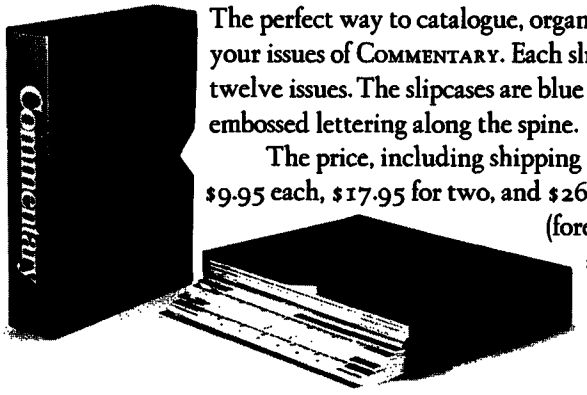

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Commentary

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Bingham's "increasing sense of separation from the modern women's movement." I suspect there is much dissatisfaction out there, but the response to my essay on the part of friends from my early days in the movement, some of whom have become highly visible figures, has been one of total silence. To me this suggests something doctrinaire in those who lead the movement, and something threatening in the prospect of deviating from its orthodoxy. I hope Sallie Bingham finds herself brave enough to write about her disaffection.

As for my assertion that men will not care for women unless there is something at stake: we *are* all to a great extent "gorillas," by which I mean our tendency to form social groups centered around a paternal male, a mother, and their biological offspring. It seems to me that this secure base (for women) and settled realm of sexual relations (for men) are what allowed the larger pursuits of civilization, from which women were generally excluded because of child-bearing and child-raising. Obviously modern birth control and abortion had a profound effect on this state of affairs, and the marketplace has done the rest. A glance around, however, would surely inform Sallie Bingham that, the old sexual consensus having been breached, a growing number of males are—let us say it straight out—unsocialized (and uncivilized), unwilling to accept the onerous duties and limitations of parenthood. We are in fact becoming less than gorillas.

I was intrigued by Anne Rittenberg's lament about the lack of high-quality child care, especially since she immediately follows it by talking about prisons (adult care of the criminal class?). Where is her evidence that criminality results from lack of state-sponsored child care? In fact, there seems to be some evidence that "child care" (as part of the service sector) correlates with a wide range of contemporary pathologies. This is not to say that criminals are bred in child-care facilities, but that such facilities substitute poorly for the authority and example of parents.

I appreciate Anne D. Hall's reminder of Aristotle's reflections on friendship, though I am puzzled as to the thrust of her comments. Does she mean to suggest that feminism has introduced women to new possibilities of friendship, including with men? If so, I would have liked her to spell out how.

Friendship, for Aristotle, was the crown of private relations, occurring among equals; most relations being unequal, he did not envisage friendship between men and women or within marriage (though he did not totally discount it, either). Still, the family, though a site of unequal relations, was also, for Aristotle, the basis of the associations one would enter into in the *polis*. I remain doubtful that a society which does not accord respect to parents (who, as Aristotle says, have bestowed on us the greatest of blessings, life and sustenance) will be able to graduate to friendship.

Nancy Rubin's letter I found very moving. It reminds me how exceedingly fortunate we were in the U.S. in the 1950's to have reached a stage of prosperity that enabled middle-class wives and mothers to lavish on their loved ones a level of care that in earlier periods was hardly within reach of the highest classes. I would never deny that, for some devotedly married women, the society-wide freedoms introduced in the 60's and 70's entailed harsh costs of their own. What I was pointing to, rather, was the astonishing fact that the enterprise of caring for one's nearest and dearest should have become so anathematized by a movement purporting to speak in the name of women.

The ideology that bolstered this process of anathematization couched its arguments in the language of human autonomy, of "choice." Such language may be suitable to consumer decisions; but when human attachments, and even marriage and child-bearing, come to be regarded in this light, we see how far removed we have become from the guiding influence of tradition, and down what cheerless path we have been led by our "enlightened" rejection of what most people still regard as the most basic truths of human nature.

Saving Jews

TO THE EDITOR:

Hillel Halkin's favorable review of Shabtai Teveth's *Ben-Gurion and the Holocaust* [January] is a defense of the indefensible.

Among many sinners against Labor Zionism Mr. Halkin lists Jim Allen. Allen's *maleficium* was to quote in his play, *Perdition*, a letter written to Labor Zionist rescue workers in Slovakia by Nathan Schwalb, the movement's agent in Switzerland. After the war, Schwalb's letter was published by Rabbi Michael Dov-Ber Weissmandel in his memoir, *Min HaMaitzer* ("From the Depths"). Allen had found the letter in my book, *Zionism in the Age of Dictators*.

Under Zionist pressure, the play was canceled before production, generating massive publicity. Allen then determined to have it published, together with a commentary by me. Suddenly Schwalb (going under his Hebrew name, Dror) sued Allen for libel. Though the suit was eventually dismissed for lack of evidence, under Britain's archaic libel laws, Schwalb was able to get an interlocutory injunction blocking publication of the letter. When the book appeared, I had the strange experience for an American of seeing a blank in my essay where I had quoted the letter.

Mr. Halkin discusses but never quotes a syllable of this letter that he says "never existed." So that readers may determine the truth for themselves, here is Weissmandel's reconstruction of it, preceded by his introductory comments:

> There was another letter in the envelope, written in a strange foreign language and at first I could not decipher at all which language it was until I realized that this was Hebrew written in Roman letters, and written to Schwalb's friends in Pressburg. It took up a page and a half. It is still before my eyes, as if I had reviewed it 101 times. This was the content of the letter:
>
> Since we have the opportunity of this courier,

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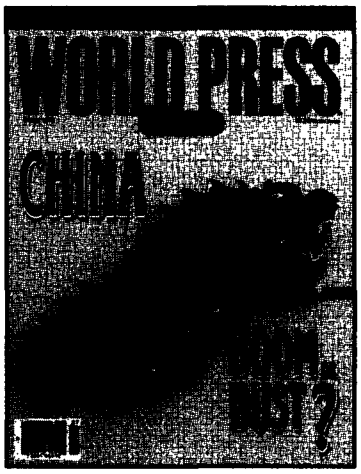

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we are writing to the group that they must constantly have before them that in the end the Allies will win. After their victory they will divide the world again between the nations, as they did at the end of World War I. Then they unveiled the plan for the first step and now, at the war's end, we must do everything so that *Eretz Israel* will become the state of Israel, and important steps have already been taken in this direction.

About the cries coming from your country, we should know that all the Allied nations are spilling much of their blood, and if we do not sacrifice any blood, by what right shall we merit coming before the bargaining table when they divide nations and lands at the war's end? Therefore it is silly, even impudent, on our part to ask these nations who are spilling their blood to permit their money into enemy countries in order to protect our blood—for *rak b'dam* ["only with blood"] shall we get the land.

This is in respect to everybody—but in respect to you, my friends, *atem taylu*, and for this purpose I am sending you money illegally with this messenger.

Rabbi Weissmandel pondered over the note:

After I had accustomed myself to this strange writing, I trembled, understanding the meaning of the first words which were "only with blood shall we attain land." But days and weeks went by, and I did not know the meaning of the last two words until I saw from something that happened that the words *atem taylu* were from *tiyul* ["to walk"], which was their special term for "rescue." In other words: you my fellow members, my nineteen or twenty close friends, get out of Slovakia and save your lives and with the blood of the remainder—the blood of all the men, women, old and young, and the sucklings—the land will belong to us. Therefore, in order to save their lives it is a crime to allow money into enemy territory, but to save you, beloved friends, here is money obtained illegally.

It is understood that I do not have these letters—for they remained there and were destroyed with everything else that was lost.

In Mr. Halkin's words, Teveth believes Weissmandel made this up "in order to cope with a haunting guilt" because he escaped from a death train while his family perished. If true, the rabbi should be awarded a posthumous Nobel Prize for literature. Because only another Isaac Bashevis Singer could concoct a political libel involving such singular Jewish details—a letter in Hebrew in Latin script, and agonizing over the conjugation of a Hebrew verb—which give the story its distinctive credibility.

In fact, the note was in keeping with Labor Zionist thinking. After *Kristallnacht*, London, hoping to ease pressure for increased immigration to Palestine, proposed admitting thousands of Jewish children into Britain. David Ben-Gurion, speaking on December 7, 1938, put Zionism above the lives of Jews:

If I knew that it would be possible to save all the children in Germany by bringing them over to England, and only half of them by transporting them to *Eretz Israel*, then I would opt for the second alternative. For we must weigh not only the life of these children but also the history of the people of Israel.

Weissmandel deceived no one. The ugly truth is that the movement that produced Ben-Gurion after *Kristallnacht* produced Schwalb during the Holocaust.

LENNI BRENNER
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Hillel Halkin's review of *Ben-Gurion and the Holocaust* leaves a disturbing question unanswered: why did not David Ben-Gurion speak out more forcefully against the British policy of closing the gates of Palestine to the Jews of Europe? The single statement of protest quoted by Mr. Halkin was made in July 1944, more than a year and a half after the Holocaust became public knowledge. Ben-Gurion's allies in the United States did no better. Not once during the war did Stephen Wise, head of a coalition of Zionist and non-Zionist organizations, publicly criticize the British or American governments for their inaction on behalf of Europe's Jews.

I would guess that Ben-Gurion felt that by giving unquestioning support to the Allies during the war he would earn their support for a settlement favorable to the Jews after the war. In this he was mistaken.

ROBERT WEINTRAUB
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Hillel Halkin's review brought back painful memories from the years 1940 to 1942, when my family, among many other refugees from Belgium, was anxiously awaiting a U.S. visa in Marseilles, then under Vichy rule. A few were lucky and escaped to Latin America (as we did), but many perished.

A constant source of worry and wonder was the meticulous combing of the qualifying documentation by U.S. consular officials. We could never figure out whether it was just arbitrary anti-Semitism (a concept we took for granted at that time), the stern rigidity of American regulations, or specific orders "from above." My subsequent reading about the State Department environment at that time leaves little doubt.

The favorite focus of attack seemed to be the crucial document, the "affidavit of support." There was often something wrong with it. One sponsor, a brother of the prospective immigrant, had shown his net worth to be over a million dollars, but the consul nevertheless demanded a statement of annual income, to prove that he really could "afford the sponsorship." In another case, the sponsor's wife had failed to co-sign the commitment, and in a third, the sponsor had changed his name minimally and failed to document how his father, the applicant, came to spell his name differently, although the affidavit clearly specified that

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he was indeed the sponsor's father. Note that round-trip correspondence took from six to twelve weeks, so that these administrative niceties were often the equivalent of a death sentence.

More baffling to us was the great reluctance of friends, relatives, and business associates to provide such affidavits. My father was astounded when his "best friend" wrote to him that he was ready and willing to share all his assets with him but that writing such an affidavit was just not possible. It was years later when I found out that accountants and attorneys had been uniformly warning their clients that this vital document would expose them to all kinds of dire consequences, including economic responsibilities, IRS audits, etc. On the other hand, a lucky few received such affidavits from virtual strangers.

I am not aware of a single case where a sponsor suffered any deleterious consequence. What about the guilt and responsibility of these advisers?

JONAS BRACHFELD
Moorestown, New Jersey

HILLEL HALKIN writes:

Lenni Brenner thinks it inconceivable that Rabbi Michael Dov-Ber Weissmandel should have imagined such a "singular Jewish detail" as "a letter in Hebrew in Latin script." Singular indeed! For what purpose? To be read by someone who understood Hebrew but could not read it in Hebrew characters? No such Jew existed in all of Europe. To fool the Nazis in case it was intercepted? Really, now.

I find it far more inconceivable that Nathan Schwalb should have written such a letter. That no copy of it was ever found in the archives is no proof of anything, of course; but what strikes me as compelling is Shabtai Teveth's documented argument that such a letter would have contradicted everything that Schwalb was desperately and devotedly trying to do during the period in question—which was to save, by bribery or other means, every drop of Jewish blood in Europe that he could.

As for Ben-Gurion's speech, I am glad that Mr. Brenner was honest enough to date it correctly, if not to refrain from the conclusion that Ben-Gurion put "Zionism above the lives of Jews." In December 1938, not even the most pessimistic observers were predicting the physical extermination of Europe's Jews. Ben-Gurion was not saying that he would willingly consign half of Germany's Jewish children to their deaths; his point was that he would prefer half of them to be living in Palestine, where they could contribute to the struggle for Jewish national rebirth, and half under difficult conditions in Germany to all of them living comfortably in England. This was, in 1938, a harsh but honest Zionist position; but since England never made such a magnanimous offer, it was also an academic one.

Mr. Brenner thinks Ben-Gurion went too far on behalf of Jewish immigration to Palestine; Robert Weintraub thinks he did not go far enough. I do not know what such a judgment is based on. Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Zionist leadership bitterly criticized British immigration restrictions throughout the war and did all they could to bring in immigrants illegally. The behavior of Stephen Wise and Jewish leaders in America is another story, but it is not the one told by the book under review.

Jonas Brachfeld's letter testifies to the indifference met by one Jewish family in trying to save itself from the Nazis. Multiply this by a factor of many millions and you have, with a few stirring exceptions, the world's reaction to Hitler's murder of the Jews. To suggest that 500,000 Jews in Palestine could have done much in the face of such indifference is, at its kindest, sadly to overestimate their power.

Aaron Copland

TO THE EDITOR:

After reading Terry Teachout's "Samuel Barber's Revenge" [April 1996], I wrote a letter to the editor expressing my appreciation but also posing the question of why Aaron Copland rather than Barber had become America's de-facto composer-laureate. In reply, Mr. Teachout said he would "take up at some later date the subject of Aaron Copland's preeminence among American composers." With "Fanfare for Aaron Copland" [January], he has kept his promise. The article led me to rethink my (as it now seems to me) too easy dismissal of Copland, and I would like to thank Mr. Teachout, whose essays in COMMENTARY play a major role in my devotion to the magazine. More power to him.

THOMAS F. BERTONNEAU
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

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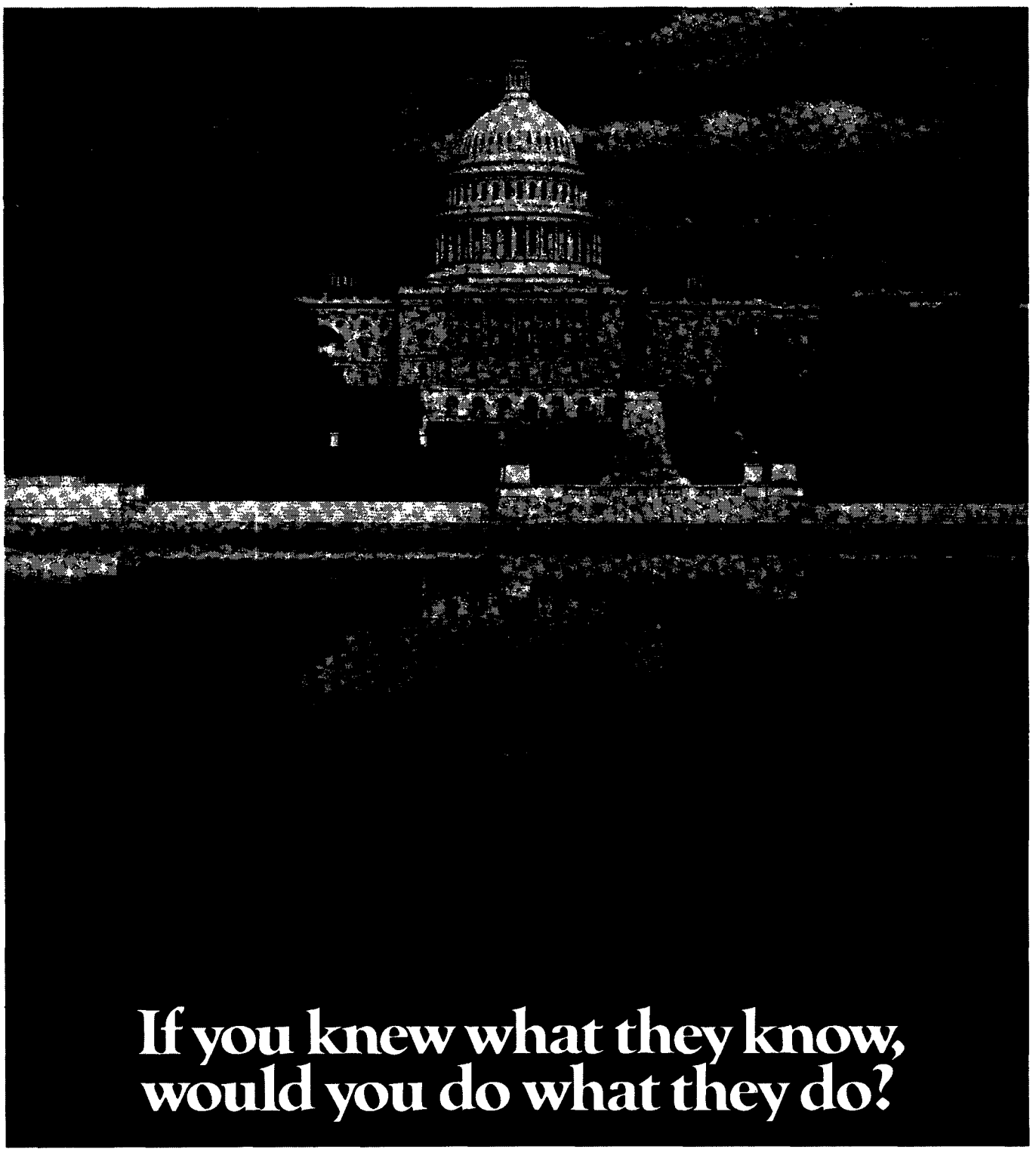

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Commentary
May 1997

Could We Fight a War If We Had To?

Frederick W. Kagan & David T. Fautua

In 376 C.E., Rome did not know that it faced a deadly crisis. Although it had the best army in the world, its numbers were barely sufficient to meet the requirements of what we would now call two major regional contingencies (MRC's). With great difficulty, one army maintained the stability of the Rhine frontier against the Germanic tribes. Another was mobilizing for war with Persia. As a result, there were practically no Roman units on the Danube frontier facing the Goths, who were then peaceful. In 376, circumstances did not seem particularly dangerous.

The next year a third MRC arose: the Goths along the Danube rebelled, destroying the few Roman detachments there and sacking a critical province. The legions marching on Persia abandoned their campaign and raced for the Danube, leaving the frontier with Persia bare of troops and vulnerable to attack. When the army on the Rhine turned to meet the emergency, the Germans quickly overran Gaul. Under the weight of this third, unanticipated, contingency the Roman two-MRC capability collapsed, and shortly thereafter the Roman army was destroyed at Adrianople.

The parallels with America's current situation are ominous. Although it is extremely unlikely that American forces will suffer an "Adrianople," they are spread as thinly today as the Roman legions were in 376. Not only can the U.S. Army not conduct two MRC's simultaneously, unless it withdrew from most of its international commitments, it could not conduct even one.

The post-cold-war world is a much more disorderly place—if not a materially more dangerous one—than was the cold-war world. During that conflict, the Soviet Union was for the most part successful in restraining its clients from aggressions which did not suit its purposes—and those purposes were narrowly defined. But with the fall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of Communism around the world, Soviet clients have run unchecked and former Communist states have fallen into civil war. From Bosnia to Iraq to Korea, not to mention within the boundaries of the former Soviet empire itself, and also not to mention the rise of China, we are seeing the beginning, not the end, of the unrest generated by the fundamental transformation of the international balance of power.

The consequences for America have also been plain to see. During the six years of the post-cold-war era, two very different U.S. administrations

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have felt the need to respond rapidly and decisively to crises around the world. President Bush sent troops to Panama, to Somalia, and to the Persian Gulf; President Clinton has sent forces to Haiti, to Bosnia, to the Gulf again, and to the seas around Taiwan. Under these two administrations, we have dispatched troops abroad more often than we did during the previous twenty years under Presidents Reagan, Carter, Ford, and Nixon. Although dispute still rages over the question of what America's role should be in the post-Soviet era, by the most reliable measure of all—what we have actually done—that role is as extensive as ever, and there is no reason to think it will soon diminish.

It was, indeed, this reality which brought senior civilian and military officials to decide to base post-cold-war U.S. strategy on the need to meet two MRC's simultaneously. (During the cold war itself, the need was to fight a war all along the Central European front, plus one other major conflict at the same time.) Former Secretary of Defense William Perry defined an MRC as one in which American forces could expect to face enemies fielding armies of up to one million men with between 2,000 and 4,000 tanks. To cope with one such MRC would require "four to five Army divisions, four to five Marine brigade-equivalents, and enhanced-readiness brigades from the Army National Guard." To cope with two nearly simultaneous MRC's would require ten Army divisions, fifteen Army National Guard brigades, and three Marine expeditionary forces reinforced by Marine reserves.

Of course, as the Roman example shows, a power with the vast global interests of the United States cannot be sure that two MRC's are in fact the worst-case scenario. In the summer of 1994, for instance, tensions between North and South Korea rose dramatically, prompting the U.S. to send troops to fill out units stationed along the boundary of the demilitarized zone and to develop detailed contingency plans for large-scale deployments. Later that summer, with tensions in Korea still high, a supposedly beaten Saddam Hussein massed his troops along the Kuwait border. The U.S. responded with the fastest deployment in history of a brigade of soldiers, Air Force wings, and Navy battle groups. All this occurred at the very time the Pentagon was finalizing plans for the invasion of Haiti by 20,000 soldiers. The inadequacy of even a two-MRC capability in this situation was apparent.

TODAY, DEFENSE cuts have made such a manifold response impossible. America's armed forces have been cut by about a third across the board since 1991. Overall military spending has decreased by 24 percent and active-duty military manpower by 27 percent.

The reductions have affected all services. For example, Air Force tactical squadrons have been cut by 28 percent since 1991; the number of planes in those squadrons has fallen by 42 percent; and the Air Force's ability to move forces rapidly between theaters has been reduced by about 22 percent. As for the Navy, it has lost 34 percent of its ships, among them 61 percent of the support ships critical for sustaining operations around the world.

But it is the Army that has been hit the hardest: spending has declined by 29 percent and active-duty manpower by 32 percent. The Army's capability to deploy forces, moreover, has actually dropped by 44 percent. There were eighteen divisions in 1991; today there are ten.

Taken together, these cuts significantly reduce America's ability to respond rapidly and with decisive force to two major regional contingencies, as well as to the many smaller crises and conflicts which currently occupy the armed forces. Acknowledging as much, some defense experts have begun to suggest that we make do with a one-and-a-half-MRC strategy. It appears, indeed, that the Quadrennial Defense Review scheduled to be released later this spring will recommend further cuts in the Army's force structure below the ten-division level which is the absolute minimum for maintaining a two-MRC capability—even though the contingencies which the two-MRC strategy was intended to meet have far from disappeared. (Neither Saddam Hussein nor the North Koreans, for example, have materially altered their belligerent stands.)

But the situation is in fact worse than this implies. The Army today could not field the force which won the Gulf war. It does not have, in other words, even a *one*-MRC capability. Whereas the American land component of the forces that defeated Saddam Hussein comprised seven divisions, five heavy and two light (out of our then-total of eighteen divisions), today, out of ten divisions, only six are heavy, and five of these are already committed to defending American interests elsewhere around the world.

Thus, the First Armored Division is in Germany recovering from a year's deployment to Bosnia, while the First Infantry Division now an-

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chors the peacekeeping mission there. The Second Infantry Division guards the demilitarized zone in Korea. The Third Infantry Division, permanently headquartered in Fort Stewart, Georgia, has sent a reinforced brigade to Saudi Arabia, now replaced by a similar brigade from the First Cavalry Division, based in Fort Hood, Texas. Lastly, the Fourth Infantry Division has one of its three brigades fully committed to a military modernization campaign; because its equipment is experimental, this brigade is not easily deployable. The other two brigades are designated to train reserve and National Guard units called up in time of war and so are also not immediately deployable.

What this means is that in order to send five heavy divisions as we did in 1991, we would have to withdraw entirely our heavy divisions from Bosnia and Korea and also send all those now stationed in the U.S., save the one that would have to train the National Guardsmen called up to fight. But withdrawing from either Bosnia or Korea, let alone from both, would itself entail large costs, undermining the credibility of America's commitments around the world and inviting instability and possibly war.

And this again is not all. Saddam allowed us six months in which to deploy, refit, and, most importantly, train for the Gulf war. We cannot assume that any future regional aggressor will move so slowly or so ineptly.

HERE, INDEED, is where the full extent of the predicament facing the Army becomes manifest. In order to grasp it, one needs to consider the new sorts of missions it is being required to carry out in the world, and their effects on its training programs.

As a fighting force, the Army's predominance today results less from its technological superiority than from the extremely high level of training undergone by its soldiers and officers. The importance of this advantage was made clear during the Gulf war. At the battle of 73 Easting on February 26, 1991, for example, an American cavalry unit consisting of 9 M1A1 tanks, 12 Bradley armored-personnel carriers, and 140 soldiers encountered a much larger tank brigade of the elite Republican Guards and in 23 minutes destroyed almost all of it, sustaining no casualties and taking over 200 prisoners. The Iraqi brigade had been dug-in in a perfect defensive position and actually surprised the American troops. So well-trained were the latter, however, that with a single command, every soldier was able to deploy and bring to bear the unit's firepower while on the move, engaging and destroying the Iraqi force without further orders.

This sharp warfighting edge was born of tough collective training in heavy-maneuver warfare. The skill demonstrated at 73 Easting resulted in the first place from cohesion within each tank and Bradley crew. To achieve such cohesion, a tank crew requires five weeks to practice loading, maintaining, aiming, and firing. At the end of that period, a crew can load and fire its main gun in three seconds, on the move, against a moving target, and almost never miss.

At the completion of crew training, each tank and Bradley crew must then integrate its skills and efforts into the unit as a whole. Thus, for another four weeks, crews practice maneuvering and firing as platoons, and then as battalions. During this time they rehearse responses for likely combat situations until those responses become second nature. And even when the battalion's skills have been honed to this level, training is still not complete, for battalions must practice fighting together in brigades—a process which occupies the remaining two months of the standard four-month training cycle.

This edge is now being lost. The Army today is heavily engaged in overseas missions, but none of them involves direct combat. They are, instead, deterrence missions (in Korea and Kuwait), peacekeeping missions (in Bosnia, Macedonia, and the Sinai), and humanitarian missions (Bosnia again and recently Somalia and Haiti). Training for such missions differs dramatically from training for conventional combat. There is no time in the training cycle to prepare adequately for both, and there are not enough units in the Army to maintain both our peacekeeping-and-deterrence commitments and the capability to fight a major regional conflict.

Consider the forces involved in Bosnia. For the past year, the First Armored Division has patrolled that war-torn land with skills gained from training not in combat but in Operations Other Than War (OOTW) in Hohenfels, Germany. There, units learn to police urban areas, establish check-points, conduct search-and-seizure and disarming operations, detect and clear minefields, and resolve conflicts among local inhabitants of different ethnicities. In addition to learning about the military threat in Bosnia, they also receive detailed briefings on the geography, climate, people, history, politics, government, economy, and in-

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frastructure of the region to which they will be deployed.

The Army's success in establishing and maintaining peace and stability in Bosnia results directly from this extensive and innovative training program. In the process, however, and in an environment of reduced budgets, it has had to shortchange training to develop combat skills of the sort demonstrated at 73 Easting.

Thus, the First Armored Division has just been relieved by the First Infantry Division. If, as seems likely, the two divisions continue to swap places every six months, each will have only a half-year in which to complete its normal training-and-maintenance pattern—a pattern that previously took, and needed, a full year. From that half-year, moreover, it will be necessary to deduct at least two months for the unit to enter and exit the theater of operations and to conduct maintenance of its equipment. On paper, that leaves exactly three months for training and one month for recuperation.

That training will necessarily be in the skills suited to a peacekeeping mission and not to combat. It cannot be otherwise. Given the amount of time available in the six-month period between deployments, one can train either to conduct policing operations or to conduct maneuver warfare, but not both. Indeed, it would be as disastrous to deploy troops trained in maneuver warfare to peacekeeping operations as to deploy peacekeeping units to a Gulf war scenario. The commitment of these two divisions to Bosnia, therefore, will effectively prevent them from responding immediately to any contingency in which maneuver warfare is being conducted. And so it goes.

To be sure, the First Armored Division and the First Infantry Division are gaining valuable experience in missions that seem destined to be an important part of our national-security involvement around the world. But we have simultaneously put at risk the Army's fundamental competence to fight wars.

PEACEKEEPING AND peacemaking missions have not only reduced the time available to heavy divisions for training in war-fighting—after all, the Army's primary mission and reason for being—they have also encroached upon funding for such training. In 1994, for instance, Army units found themselves reacting to a host of OOTW and deterrence missions in Rwanda, Bosnia, Somalia, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Northern Iraq, Korea, Haiti, and even in California to fight forest fires. The deployments to Korea alone cost nearly $2 billion, drawn from budgets which normally support training. Together with the diversion of soldiers, the net result of this loss of dollars was that three Army divisions reported slippages in their readiness ratings.

Finally, still another set of problems bedevils the Army in its reduced state. This one concerns the logistics units (known as below-the-line units or BTL's) which support combat—and, now, peacekeeping—forces with everything from medical supplies to fuel, ammunition, food, and potable water, and thus make all movement and activity possible. There are simply not enough of these essential units to go around, and so when any single brigade is deployed on a mission, the rest of the division—along with other divisions within the corps—is essentially immobilized, able neither to train collectively at home nor to deploy elsewhere.

This, for instance, was the dilemma facing the XVIII Airborne Corps, whose logistical elements supported the fielding of the Tenth Mountain Division to Haiti in September 1994. So great were the requirements of that operation that within two weeks the XVIII Airborne Corps had run out of BTL units; it was forced not only to activate Reserve and National Guard replacements for its own missing units at home but to send additional support to Haiti in the form of BTL's from other sectors of the Army.

Even when the Tenth Mountain Division was relieved in January 1995 by a single brigade of the 25th Infantry Division, the headaches remained severe. That one brigade required about half the logistical support of division and corps alike, which left the division's other two brigades without sufficient back-up even for routine training. For the duration of the Haiti deployment, those brigades were not deployable and could not be trained to become so.

BTL's maintain perhaps the highest operational tempo of any in the Army. For example, while the First Infantry Division and the First Armored Division rotate into and out of Bosnia every six months, their BTL support groups remain there year 'round. In the case of Haiti, logistics units were deployed a month before combat forces and remained for two months after those forces had withdrawn. What is more, about three-quarters of the BTL's are drawn from the Reserves, forcing the few in the active Army to be constantly on the go. Soldiers in one military-po-

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lice unit, for instance, found themselves deployed to Operation Just Cause in Panama, Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia, and Operation Restore Hope in Somalia—all in one tour of duty. This operational tempo cannot be sustained indefinitely, and the scarcity of available units of this kind could well hinder attempts to deploy a force to another Haiti or Bosnia tomorrow—even if we could find the soldiers.

ADVOCATES OF spending cuts have an answer to all these problems. American technological superiority, they say, can overcome any numerical deficiencies, and in today's world with its new military realities it is more important to develop and procure new technologies than to maintain sizable ground forces. Some have even argued that the Air Force's high-performance aircraft and "smart" weapons, or the Navy's long-range cruise-missile system, can replace the Army in many if not all MRC's and lesser crises.

This view rests, in part, on the false assumption that armed force is mainly for killing people. As we have seen, however, the Army is now mostly otherwise engaged. Only ground forces (supported by air and naval assets) can perform peacekeeping chores—separating belligerents, establishing and protecting supply lines, and assuring orderly elections—and ground forces are similarly essential in what is today perhaps the Army's most important role: deterrence. The deployment of ground forces to a region unmistakably signals American resolve; they are much more salient than carrier battle groups (which usually remain invisible over the horizon) or Air Force wings (which can depart as quickly as they arrived), and their presence demonstrates a clear readiness to take casualties if necessary.

But the high-tech view is no less misleading when it comes to actual warfare. The high-performance aircraft and precision weapons systems touted by the techno-advocates can indeed degrade an enemy's combat power. But they cannot force an end to the conflict. For more than a month the most advanced weaponry pummeled Iraq from the air and sea, leaving Saddam battered but still defiant. It took 100 hours of ground combat to destroy his army physically and seize the territory at issue. This is the way of the world.

Today's Army has reached its breaking point. A force structure of ten divisions is barely adequate to handle even the peacekeeping, stability, and deterrence operations which face it now, let alone those likely to arise as instability continues or flares into war in regions of vital concern to the United States. Crises, moreover, can arise quickly and without warning. In the summer of 1994, we were able to deter Saddam and North Korea and still invade Haiti. True, we may not have been able successfully to fight both Saddam and North Korea at the same time, as called for in our two-MRC strategy. But whether we could have done so or not in 1994, we would find it almost impossible to do so today.

Just as the Roman empire in 376 did not foresee the crisis that befell it the following year, we may yet encounter a situation for which we are not prepared. Fortunately, Americans can still choose to pay for an Army large enough to maintain and restore stability in regions of critical interest and still be able to face major regional contingencies as they arise. If we decline to do so, a threat may emerge without warning one day, and we will find ourselves without the legions to confront it.

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Arafat and the Uses of Terror

Jonathan Torop

In the wake of recent acts of terrorism and anti-Israel violence by Palestinians, it seemed for a moment that even supporters of the "peace process" had begun to wonder about Yasir Arafat's commitment to his proclaimed goal of cooperation with Israel and to the renunciation of violence. Thus, in the immediate aftermath of the March 21 bombing in a Tel Aviv café, questions were raised about the PLO chairman's ability or even his willingness to control the extreme elements within rejectionist groups like Hamas. In the months before the most recent round of violence, Arafat had freed 120 Hamas terrorists, including over a dozen directly involved in previous killings of Israelis, and he had conferred with Hamas representatives on his return from meeting Bill Clinton in Washington in March.

Yet by the time Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, came to Washington in early April, the main question preoccupying American officials from the President on down was not the peaceful intentions of the PLO but the peaceful intentions of *Israel*, and especially whether Netanyahu (in the words of a report in the *New York Times)* was ready "to prove—in deeds, not just words—that he [was] sincere" in those intentions. This was a remarkable (if, by now, all too familiar) turnabout. Still, no matter how often it is downplayed or denied, the issue raised by the recent round of violence is the same issue that has dogged the "peace process" since its inception. That issue is not Arafat's relation with the extremists, and not whether he can rein them in. It is, rather, his own fundamental disposition, and that of the movement he leads, toward the state of Israel.

Speaking on the White House lawn in September 1993, Yitzhak Rabin, the late Prime Minister of Israel, hailed the newly signed Oslo accords between his country and the PLO as marking the start of an era in which "we all will say farewell to arms." And indeed, those agreements stipulated that from then on, the parties would work out their differences through negotiation and without resort to violence. In particular, the PLO was bound by Oslo to relinquish the option of war against Israel. Arafat, soon to become chairman of the Palestinian Authority (PA), explicitly accepted this point by stating in a formal letter to Rabin (September 9, 1993) that the PLO "renounces the use of terrorism and other acts of violence," and in his own remarks on the White House lawn he too invoked a new age of "peace" and "coexistence."

The understanding embedded in the Oslo accords was reiterated in subsequent agreements as well. Thus, the May 1994 Gaza-Jericho agreement (also known as the Cairo agreement) stated that the "Palestinian Authority . . . shall . . . abstain from incitement, including hostile propaganda,"

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against Israel. In the September 28, 1995, Israel-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II), the PA promised to "take all measures necessary in order to prevent acts of terrorism, crime, and hostilities." And after the Israeli withdrawal from four-fifths of Hebron in January 1997, the PA pledged once again to prevent "incitement and hostile propaganda," combat terror, and prevent violence.

A look at the record, however, reveals that to Arafat and his men, the Oslo accords in no way require the end of conflict or the surrender of the war option against Israel. Since Oslo, rather, the PLO has been following its own version of the classic strategy of guerrilla warfare: "jaw jaw, shoot shoot." Even while invoking the pieties of reconciliation, Arafat and his aides *themselves* have regularly resorted to threats of violence, incitements to violence, encouragement of violence, and outright acts of violence. For them, Oslo or no Oslo, the armed struggle against the Jewish state remains a central element of strategy.

PERHAPS THE most dramatic illustration of the PLO's attitude toward its Oslo commitments was the mini-war launched by Arafat in September 1996 that left over 70 dead—and that resulted in increased international pressure on the Jewish state to accede to Palestinian demands.*

What happened was this. Shortly after the government of Israel opened a new exit to an archeological tunnel in Jerusalem, Arafat stated that this action constituted a "crime against [Islamic] religious and holy" places—in fact, the tunnel was nowhere in the vicinity of such places—and that Palestinians "will not stand by quietly." He, certainly, did not. Ordering Palestinian police not to stop crowds from "spontaneously" charging Israeli troops, the chairman declared that Jerusalem would have to be won with "blood" and "fire" and whipped up PA security forces with these words:

> They will fight for Allah, and they will kill and be killed, and this is a solemn oath. . . . Our blood is cheap compared with the cause which has brought us together and which at moments separated us, but shortly we will meet again in heaven. . . . Palestine is our land and Jerusalem is our capital.

Palestinian media and PA officials echoed their leader's sentiments. In Ramallah (according to a report in the *Wall Street Journal*), the Voice of Palestine radio station "ran constant broadcasts calling on Palestinians to go into the streets and enlist in the battle against the 'Zionist entity.'" The religious leader of the Palestinian police forces, Mufti Abdel-Salam Abu Shukeidem, urged his soldiers, "Our blessings to you, you who fight at the gates of the enemy and knock on heaven's door with his skull in your hands." All these words had their intended effect. As one Palestinian told the Associated Press, "The Palestinian Authority is giving us the green light . . . to come back to the *intifada*."

But it would be a mistake to think that it took an actual "provocation" by Israel for Arafat and his men to prepare Palestinians for violence. A month and a half before the tunnel incident, Arafat was quoted in the *New York Times* calling Israel a "demon" and urging Palestinians to use "all means" at their disposal to fight the Jewish state. Muhammad Dahlan, the PA's top security official for Gaza, said during the same period: "The Palestinian Authority does not exclude the return to the armed struggle, and it will then use its weapons." And in an interview with an Egyptian newspaper, Arafat, when asked what means he had at his disposal to halt the "Judaization of Jerusalem," replied, "I will tell you something: It is wrong to believe that I have nothing. We have a great deal and my quiver is full. But I had better not say too much. . . ."

THE CHAIRMAN'S "quiver," as is by now well known, includes tens of thousands of men under arms. According to the Oslo agreement, at the present stage the PA was supposed to limit itself to a force of 24,000 lightly armed policemen. Arafat's army is by now at least 40,000 strong; its troops travel in armored personnel carriers, and in most cases carry machine guns, wear fatigues, and boast combat experience. In addition, Arafat has formed as many as seven or perhaps ten different secret-police forces in the West Bank and Gaza.

The existence of these armed forces figures prominently in the PLO's public diplomacy. Thus, during the violence in late September, the PA's representative in France, Leila Shahid, alluded to "thousands of armed Palestinian police in the territories" and hinted darkly of a return to violence that would be "more serious than the *intifada*." Sometimes such warnings are uttered with an air of feigned helplessness, as if to suggest that Arafat, despite his own wishes, might not be able to restrain the righteous ire of his followers. His aide Faisal Husseini told Germany's *Der Spiegel* that

> If the Palestinians continue to feel that the

* For a further discussion of the September mini-war, see Norman Podhoretz's "The Tragic Predicament of Benjamin Netanyahu" in the December 1996 issue.—ED.

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> Israelis are not interested in the continuation of the peace process, the Palestinian government will no longer be able to control the people—not always even their own armed policemen.

The truth, of course, is otherwise: within limits, Arafat can turn the violence on and off to suit his purposes. When he issued an unambiguous cease-fire command last September, PA soldiers immediately stopped shooting; and when there was a danger of things getting out of hand in Jerusalem this March, his troops acted as a restraining force.

Perhaps the most succinct summing-up of the Palestinian position on the use, and the usefulness, of armed force has come from two PA officials. Here is Ahmad Quray (alias Abu Ala), chairman of the Palestine Legislative Council and head of the Palestinian negotiating committee:

> If Israel does not honor the agreements, . . . the response to the continuation of the occupation will be more dangerous than the *intifada*. . . . [T]he arms available . . . and the organization [are] better than in the past. . . . The alternative to peace will be bad for the Israelis, something which they do not want. The Palestinian people will oppose the occupation, from children to adults, *including the Palestinian police* [emphasis added].

And here is Nabil Shaath, Arafat's planning minister, speaking in March 1996—that is, *after* a wave of suicide bombings had killed 59 Israelis, and *after* an anti-terrorism summit which was intended to signal a total repudiation of violence on the part of the Palestinians:

> If the negotiations reach a dead end, we shall go back to the struggle and strife, as we did for 40 years. It is not beyond our capabilities. . . . As long as Israel goes forward [with concessions], there are no problems, which is why we observe the agreements of peace and nonviolence. But if and when Israel will say, "That's it, we won't talk about Jerusalem, we won't return refugees, we won't dismantle settlements, and we won't retreat from borders," then all the acts of violence will return. *Except that this time we'll have 30,000 armed Palestinian soldiers who will operate in areas in which we have unprecedented elements of freedom* [emphasis added]. . . .

That statements like these reflect a real strategy rather than ad-hoc bluster is made clearer by the fact that they have a history: the incitements of 1996 were simply an extension into practice of a position adumbrated by PLO leaders ever since Oslo, and repeated at regular intervals regardless of who has happened to be in power in Israel. In May 1993, for example, in a speech at Ramallah's Bir Zeit University just after the signing of the first Oslo accord, Faisal Husseini told his Arab audience, "Everything you see and hear today is for tactical and strategic reasons. We have not given up the rifle. We still have armed gangs in the areas and if we do not get our state we will take them out of the closet and fight again." Around the same time, Husseini told the Egyptian weekly *Al-Arabi*, "If Israel continues to undermine the path to peace, there will be no other alternative but . . . the military option."

Moreover, Palestinian leaders have gone beyond issuing threats of violence simply as a means of forcing further concessions from Israel. They quite openly keep alive the hope of destroying the Jewish state altogether. This they have done not only by refusing to amend the Palestinian Covenant, which calls for the elimination of Israel, but by periodically restating their particular interpretation of the "peace process."

Thus, the PA's justice minister, Freih Abu Middein, has said, "We must remember that the main enemy of the Palestinian people, now and forever, is Israel." On another occasion, reading a speech in Arafat's name, Abu Middein stated, "I say once more that Israel shall remain the principal enemy of the Palestinian people, not only now but also in the future."

Arafat himself, in a radio address in November 1995, asserted that "The struggle will continue until all of Palestine is liberated." Similarly, Arafat informed a group of Arab ambassadors meeting in Stockholm in January 1996 that the PLO had plans to "eliminate the state of Israel [by making] life unbearable for the Jews." He went on:

> We Palestinians will take over everything, including Jerusalem. . . . We of the PLO will now concentrate all our efforts on splitting Israel psychologically into two camps. Within five years we will have six to seven million Arabs living on the West Bank and in Jerusalem . . . we [will] import all kinds of Arabs. . . . Three and a half million Arabs will thus be brought to Palestine. You understand that we plan to eliminate the state of Israel and establish a purely Palestinian state. . . . I have no use for Jews; they are and remain Jews. We now need all the help we can get from you in our battle for a united Palestine under total Arab-Muslim control.

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IT IS in line with such long-term goals that Arafat—not Hamas, but Arafat himself—has repeatedly called for *jihad*, holy war, against the Jewish state. What does he mean by this? In Islam, *jihad* ("striving") has come historically to signify a religious duty to attack infidels and remove them from the House of Islam. All male, free, adult Muslims are required to engage in *jihad*, and a Muslim who dies in battle is assured a place in paradise. That such acts of martyrdom exercise a powerful hold on the imagination of Palestinians can be readily gleaned from their penchant for suicide bombings—and from the enthusiasm these acts arouse among the populace.

To be sure, there is in Islam the concept—uncommon though it is—of a peaceful *jihad*, and Arafat has often disingenuously protested that this is what he has had in mind in invoking the term. But the notion of a peaceful *jihad* is so rare that one never encounters it in Arab writing or speech without an accompanying explanation for its use. In the speeches of Arafat and other PA officials, by contrast, calls for *jihad* are routinely joined to invocations of battle, sacrifice, and armed struggle.

The sheer number of *jihad* speeches given by Arafat since the signing of Oslo I in September 1993 is nothing short of astonishing. One of the most notorious occurred at a mosque in South Africa in 1994. During an event closed to the media, the chairman proclaimed:

> The *jihad* will continue. . . . You have to understand our main battle is Jerusalem. . . . You have to come and fight a *jihad* to liberate Jerusalem, your precious shrine. . . . No, it is not their capital. It is our capital.

Arafat echoed the South Africa speech literally dozens of times in 1995 and 1996. On June 19, 1995, he was filmed at Al-Azhar University in Gaza:

> We are all seekers of martyrdom in the path of truth and right toward Jerusalem, the capital of the state of Palestine. The commitment stands and the oath is firm to continue this long and arduous *jihad* in the path of martyrdom and sacrifices. . . . The commitment still stands and the oath is still firm to continue this difficult *jihad*, this long *jihad*, this arduous *jihad* in the path of martyrs, the path of sacrifices, but this is a path of victory and glory.

Shortly after the violence committed by PA police in September 1996, Arafat announced again:

> We will be willing to die as martyrs until our flag flies over Jerusalem. No one should believe they can frighten us with weapons. We have much stronger weapons, the weapon of belief, the weapon of sacrifice, the weapon of *jihad*. . . . We shall continue the *jihad*, the long *jihad*, a complex *jihad*, a *jihad* of attrition, of holy death. Warfare is our only way to victory. The path of glory, the path of *jihad*.

On October 21, 1996, at a refugee camp in the West Bank:

> We know only one word: *jihad*, *jihad*, *jihad*. When we stopped the *intifada*, we did not stop the *jihad* for the establishment of a Palestinian state whose capital is Jerusalem. He who doesn't like it—let him drink some water from the Dead Sea or the Sea of Gaza. . . . We are now entering the phase of the great *jihad* prior to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state whose capital is Jerusalem. . . . We are in a conflict with the Zionist movement and the [1917] Balfour Declaration [recognizing a Jewish homeland in Palestine] and all imperialist activities. . . . We have a long struggle ahead of us. I call upon each and every one of you to bring into this world at least twelve children and to give me ten of them in order to continue the struggle.

What does it say about a leader formally committed to peace that he loses no opportunity to advocate holy war? And what does it say about the prospects for peace that overwhelming numbers of his constituents appear to support this aim, and a significant number have been prepared to act on it?

LIKE A car accelerating toward a brick wall, the "peace process" is approaching the stage of final-status talks, in which the most complicated and intractable issues—Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, borders, statehood—are to be discussed. Given the delicacy of the moment, it should give pause to any disinterested onlooker that Israelis and Palestinians disagree on a point as basic as whether the Oslo agreements say, in Yitzhak Rabin's words, "farewell to arms" or, rather, as Arafat appears to have it, "we reserve the right to return to armed struggle at any time our demands are not met, and even to seek the final destruction of our 'peace partner.'"

The simple fact is that Arafat and his men have spent three and a half years expounding just this position, and in the mini-war of September 1996 and other outrages directed against Israel have demonstrated their own readiness to match word to deed. When the crunch comes, no one can claim not to have been warned.

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For the Love of Country

Gertrude Himmelfarb

"THE ERA of big government is over," President Clinton announced in his State of the Union address in January 1995, responding to the mandate of the people as expressed in the newly elected Republican Congress. That statement has proved to be so patently false—look only at Clinton's proposals for educational reforms, which would enhance rather than diminish the role of government—that one may overlook how misleading it is in another respect. For "big government" is a euphemism for the current version of the "welfare state." And it was this that the American people had rejected.

The welfare state is objectionable not only because it is big government but because it is bad government. The English, who have had more experience with it than we have, call it the "nanny state." It treats individuals not as adults but as wayward and improvident children who require the constant supervision and protection of their guardians—which is to say, legislators, bureaucrats, social workers. That such a state is inefficient, costly, cumbersome, corrupt are the least of its vices. Its real offense is that it is demeaning and demoralizing to those who come under its not too tender embrace.

In reaction to the welfare state, conservatives, and many liberals as well, are now seeking to restore and revitalize the institutions of civil society—family, community, church, local associations, private enterprises—in the hope that there, in the intimate, personal relations of daily life, individuals will be able to function as free, responsible, moral adults. This is an admirable idea, and one that deserves to be put at the top of the political agenda. It will take, to be sure, a good deal of ingenuity and determination to carry it out. We will, for example, have to go beyond the current strategy of the "devolution" of welfare to the states and devolve it further to civil society, thus making it the ultimate responsibility of families, communities, and charities.

We will also have to divest ourselves of unrealistic expectations about civil society itself. Some families are too dysfunctional to perform the roles assigned to them, or, if not actually dysfunctional, then so weakened by divorce, serial cohabitation, and single-parenthood as to be of little avail in the task ahead. So too, private and communal associations, even many churches, are so permeated by the dominant cultural values that they can hardly serve as paragons of morality and responsibility. It is evidently not enough to revitalize civil society; we have the far more difficult task of remoralizing it.

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But there is another problem that the welfare state has bequeathed to us and that civil society—even a rejuvenated civil society—may not be able to solve. The welfare state has not only denigrated individuals. It has denigrated the state itself by reducing it to the role of *in loco parentis* and obliging it to assume the domestic, "nurturing" tasks of parents and families. It has, in effect, depoliticized the state, deprived it of its unique and essential functions. By the same token, it has depoliticized the citizenry. The citizens of a welfare state are not so much citizens, defined by their membership and activity in a political community, as subjects, wards of the state.

The proponents of civil society, in their eagerness to do away with the nanny state, may run the same risk—of belittling, even delegitimizing, the state itself, and in the process subverting the idea of citizenship. In the new dispensation, the inhabitants of civil society, released from the bondage of the welfare state, will no longer be subjects or dependents. But neither will they be citizens in the classic, political sense of that word. They will simply be inhabitants of civil society—individuals, families, neighbors, parishioners, employees or employers, members of one or another "voluntary association." As such, they will care for themselves and for one another, for the young, the old, and the infirm; they will provide for their needs and amenities. Unlike the infantilized subjects of the welfare state, they will be adults, with the rights and obligations, the satisfactions and duties, of responsible, moral individuals.

That is all to the good, and infinitely better than our present situation. But it is not enough. For there is another dimension of adulthood lacking here, and that is the political. Aristotle reminds us that man is "born for citizenship"; he is "by nature a political animal." Not a "social animal," as this phrase is often mistranslated. It is not in the "household" or in the "village," Aristotle says, but only in the *polis* that man is truly human, decisively different from "bees or any other gregarious animals." Bees and animals, after all, also inhabit households and villages—civil society, as we now say. They provide shelter and sustenance for themselves and their young; they even have social relations and social structures. What they do not have is a polity, a government of laws and institutions by means of which—and only by means of which, Aristotle believed—man consciously, rationally tries to establish a just regime and pursue the good life.

I MAY be especially sensitive to this apolitical, even in some instances anti-political, aspect of civil society because I have encountered it before, in quite another context. Decades ago, before politicians and political scientists discovered the virtues of civil society, historians discovered the virtues of social history—"history," as it has been called, "with the politics left out."*

This was history "from below," not the "elitist" history that focuses on great events, great ideas, and great men (or even great women), but the history of ordinary people in their ordinary lives. The subjects of the new history—the poor, women, minorities, blacks—had been omitted or "marginalized" in the old history, it was said, because they played no conspicuous role in politics. To bring them onto center stage and give them starring roles, history itself had to be depoliticized. Thus, where the old history took place primarily in the political arena, the new history focuses on the home, family, community, workplace—in short, on civil society.

The effect of the new history has been not only to depoliticize history but to de-aggrandize it as well, to shift attention from great, public, historic events and personages to the daily lives of the "anonymous masses." The new historians pride themselves on "de-privileging" the great, restoring the existential reality of life, rescuing ordinary people from "the enormous condescension of history." One eminent social historian has explained why politics is of little importance:

> Have not the vast majority of people in the past thought that where they lived and how they made a living, who [*sic*] they married, and what happened to their children rather more "basic and significant" than who won the last election?

But is it not a new and more demeaning kind of condescension to assume that the vast majority of people are less interested in "who won the last election" than, say, a Harvard professor, who can somehow manage to be interested in national politics without neglecting his home, career, or family? And is not politics itself—not only the "last election" but the democratic system that sustains and validates elections—of vital importance to the lives of all Americans, and perhaps to "ordinary" people more than to the "elite" because their freedom, rights, opportunities, and even their livelihood are more intimately bound up with the democratic political process?

* See my "The 'New History,'" COMMENTARY, January 1975.

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Some of the enthusiasts for civil society may be falling into the trap of the social historians, of unwittingly disparaging those they respect and giving credibility to those they distrust. One of the unfortunate consequences of the welfare state is that it has exacerbated the anarchic impulse in American society. The bureaucratic bullies of the Left give a semblance of plausibility to terrorists of the Right. Today, more than ever, when there are so many legitimate grievances against government, we cannot afford to delegitimize legitimate government.

Nor can we afford the luxury of being apolitical, of depriving ourselves of the proper resources of government. Indeed, civil society itself requires them, if only to preserve its independence, strengthen its constituent parts, and thus help remoralize itself. A sensible tax policy could encourage two-parent families, as it currently encourages home ownership. Or divorce laws could be devised to deter the break-up of the family, rather than, as at present, facilitating it. Or the courts could support (as they did for much of our history) the rights of communities to enforce anti-pornography, anti-obscenity, or anti-abortion ordinances. Or, if the courts are recalcitrant, the legislature could act more vigorously to achieve these ends.

What is required, in short, is a delicate balancing act: to discredit and dismantle the welfare state while retaining a healthy respect for the state itself and its institutions. In much the same way, critics of the current administration have the task of exposing the legal and moral corruption of the President and his associates, without detracting from the dignity and legitimacy of the presidency itself—indeed, pursuing the former all the more vigorously in order to preserve the latter.

BUT something even more important is at stake in the denigration of the state. "Citizenship," in discussions of civil society, is all too often reduced to civility and sociability. Good citizens are good neighbors: they attend PTA meetings, donate blood, curb their dogs, are courteous and considerate. These are no mean virtues; in our time, they are very considerable virtues. But they are not the only virtues associated with citizenship. Some virtues—ambition, zeal, energy, venturesomeness, leadership, and heroism—transcend family and community. These are outsized virtues that may only be realized on a national or even international scale. The qualities that make for good neighbors do not necessarily make for great leaders, still less for heroes.

The devaluing of these virtues impoverishes not only society as a whole but also those individuals who do not themselves aspire to them, who make no claim to eminence. Hegel, who is better known for his praise of "world-historical individuals," nevertheless appreciated the need of ordinary citizens for a spirit that elevates them above their ordinary lives. Civil society, he said (long before Tocqueville popularized the idea), is that "territory of mediation" where people, in addition to satisfying their needs, begin to overcome their "particularity" by experiencing themselves as more than isolated individuals. But only in the state, he insisted, do they truly fulfill themselves and transcend their particularity by being identified with something larger than themselves, with the "Spirit" or "Idea" manifest in the state.

Americans have never been comfortable with terms like "Spirit" or "Idea," especially as applied to the state. But we do understand and respect the ideas of nationality and patriotism. "Statecraft," as George Will has memorably put it, is a form of "soulcraft"; it helps shape the character, and hence the soul, of a people. Of a people, not merely of individuals. And not merely the character of a people but its very identity, its sense of nationality and its spirit of patriotism. This, finally, is what we are in danger of losing—and again, today more than ever.

PARADOXICALLY, THE collapse of Communism, so far from invigorating us as a nation triumphant over an "evil empire," seems to have left us demoralized and purposeless. The absence of any external threat to the country, a welfare state woefully deficient in soulcraft, a multiculturalism that has fragmented society, and a postmodernism that has deconstructed the culture—the combination is proving nearly fatal to our sense of national identity and pride.

Civil society is the least of the culprits in this regard, but it can unwittingly contribute to the same effect. It is natural and commendable for individuals to seek satisfaction in their families and communities, to make these the center of their emotional ties and moral commitments. But to feel completely fulfilled in these roles and entirely identified with them is to lose that larger sense of national identity which comes not from civil society but from the state and the polity. Today, when politics has been so tainted by cynicism and scandal, and when the state itself has been so per-

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verted by the politics of welfare, the retreat to private and communal life is all too understandable. But it would be most unfortunate if it were to deprive the state of the services, the resources, and the loyalties of its citizens, in peacetime and, more urgently, in wartime.

Why compete for national office and take up residence in Washington, if all one's values and interests are centered on one's family and community? Why support a strong national defense and a vigorous foreign policy designed to maintain America's supremacy, if one's commitments are entirely local? Why, in times of national emergency, take up arms and possibly give one's life, if one has so tenuous a relationship to the country as a whole—if there is so little sense of a national interest requiring that ultimate sacrifice?

The phrase "little platoon," coined two centuries ago by Edmund Burke, has become one of the watchwords of civil society. But the context in which that phrase appears is rarely quoted:

> To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed toward a love to our country, and to mankind.

And again:

> We begin our public affections in our families. . . . We pass on to our neighborhoods and our habitual provincial connections. . . . Perhaps it is a sort of elemental training to those higher and more large regards, by which alone men come to be affected, as with their own concern, in the prosperity of a kingdom. . . .

Civil society, Burke teaches us, is a two-way street. It takes us back to our roots, to our nearest and dearest. But it should also take us forward to our nation and country. Love of country—the expression now sounds almost archaic—is an ennobling sentiment, quite as ennobling as love of family and community. It elevates us, invests our daily life with a larger meaning, dignifies the individual even as it humanizes politics. "Properly understood," as Tocqueville would have said, civil society should not be the enemy of the state but its ally—an ally not of the welfare state, to be sure, but of a state worthy of our "public affections."

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All-City Adolescent

A Story

Johanna Kaplan

Dan Gorelick's earliest sense of luxury, of the mysterious ways of the rich—their deep, scented rooms, their leisurely weekday comforts—was somehow bound up with the cream-colored Art Deco apartment houses which, once upon a time, in his childhood, had marked the Grand Concourse. These buildings, with their exotic casement windows and their strange, sleek stripes of orange brick, were not far from Yankee Stadium, not far from Bronx County Courthouse, so of course Dan could see them now; in fact, they were still there. Only now, as he rode past them in the Medical Center shuttle bus with one of his new residents, on his way to do a consult at a neighborhood mental-health clinic, the sight of these houses—their white-gold brick-fronts scrawled with graffiti, their elegant canopies ripped and pitched sideways—made it hard, no, impossible to convey to the Russian girl sitting alongside him what all this had long ago seemed to represent.

Not that an explanation was actually called for. But because he was becoming self-conscious about his deep, glued-to-the-window reverie—it made for too long, too withholding a silence—he tapped his hand on the glass, saying, with a shrug and an abashed smile, "You know something, Svetlana? I grew up not far from here." Though exactly what use she could be expected to make of this information was another question entirely. Because assuming she had little more to draw on than the evidence of the boarded-up stores and cannibalized cars just outside the bus windows, what else could she conclude but that he was some kind of tough-guy survivor of the slums, a lion of inner-city perils? And this was so ludicrous, so embarrassingly wide of the mark, that a certain fuzz of boredom hung over the leafy, sloping streets of his childhood in his dreams even now.

What was the worst crime incident he could recall from those days? Once, an unknown man had been discovered exposing himself to housewives as they hung up the family wash on rooftop clotheslines. Briefly then, hanging up the wash had turned into a job for husbands, and all the boys in the building, pulled as if by magnetic force from their stamp collections, comic books, and games, had gone running up to the dangerous roof with their fathers to cavort and cause havoc among the haphazardly clothes-pinned towels and ballooning underwear. The damp, bleach-smelling sheets and suggestive brassieres and pajama pants flapped in his mind's eye beside all the primitive rooftop TV antennas, flapped, above the roof-odor of tar, through his once-young father's dreaming fingers, as Dan now

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leaned toward the eager-looking immigrant doctor, saying, "It was different then, Svetlana. Everything, everything. . . ." He made a brusque gesture. "The whole ball of wax."

And what in hell was *that* supposed to mean to a woman whose English was still so tentative? In fact, she did seem bewildered. Frowning, she turned to him with that expression she had of such immense sympathetic sweetness, charm—*kheyn*, his mother would surely have called it: it had the deep flavor of inner sweetness tested by suffering—and in her very hesitant, lilting, heavily-accented English, said, "But, *mmnn*, your education, Dr. Gore*l*ick. Of course, not university, no, I understand. But, *mmnn*, before zen—zat was also not far from *here*?"

"Bronx Science, yesss!," he almost whooped out, instinctively giving her a thumbs-up as he motioned toward the window. "As a matter of fact, we'll practically pass it, I think—well, anyway the old building, I mean, the famous original one. Not the one I actually went to, the new one. In fact, that one is actually quite a ways up and a couple of blocks to your—" What was he doing rattling on about road directions like some addled old gas-station attendant? Why was she supposed to interest herself in the antique prestige calibrations of the legendary *old* Science building vis-à-vis the *new* one when God only knew what she might have had to endure—what slights, what fear, what indignities—as a Jew in Russia, every single day all through her school years? Probably it was the "Dr. Gore*l*ick" business that was starting to make him just a little crazy.

HE TRIED a charm-invested smile himself—the smile that sometimes came to him when a patient was being particularly resistant—and said, "Truly, my mother didn't name me Doctor when I was born, Svetlana. So do me a favor, please, call me Dan. We're colleagues." Though he understood her objection perfectly—"Oh, no, no, no, I don't have your, *mmnn*, degree," she had reddened in their first supervisory session. By which she meant rank: that he was the professor, and she was only a resident. And this Mickey Mouse distinction, a pure product of happenstance, prevented her from calling him by his first name, despite the fact that she had already been a practicing physician in Russia. Ah, but not a psychiatrist. "In Russia, I did pediatrics," she had told him with her *kheynevdik*, serious smile as they sat over cold coffee and stacked-up xeroxes of journal articles in his cluttered, dark, end-of-the-corridor office. "But always, really, I wanted to do psychiatry. Only, *mmnn*, you understand, not *zere*. So now, here, since I must repeat my training—now, well! I think finally I will be able."

There was a drizzle pattering against the bus windows as he tackled her again, this time in a musing, therapeutic mode. "Look, I know it doesn't feel so comfortable at this point, using my first name. It doesn't somehow feel . . . exactly right, I understand. But suppose I just try and clarify something here. Really everyone does it. Residents, medical students, nurses, social workers—really everyone. . . . So I'd say, give it a whirl, Svetlana. Why not?"

"*Dan*." Her nod was correct, obedient, and she reddened a little again in the muddy light as she bent down to rummage for something in her briefcase. He saw then that the darkish cloth case she carried was in fact the same dark-green, zippered, nylon bag with the shoulder strap that his daughter Rebecca had taken along with her only two weeks before, stuffed past zipping, to Florence for her junior year—the ill-starred bag of the last-minute-catastrophe-spilled-shampoo episode: almost certainly *his* fault, somehow, when he squeezed down on it with all his might to help her zip it closed. "Oh, God, Dad! How could you always screw everything up like that? I don't believe it! Would you look at what I've got to deal with *now*, Mom? It's just grotesque!"

Rebecca, up before six and already ragged from the countless fevered mini-dramas of departure, had burst into tears, shouting, only minutes before they'd had to leave for Kennedy. "Because of *you* now, for a whole year in Europe, wherever I go, I'll have to be this totally obvious American girl with the stinking green bag!" Stinking? *Stinking*? "Beck! It'll smell like your hair. . . . Your beautiful, beautiful hair!" he had croaked back to her, his whole body—all his systems—suddenly weak from the absolute unreversability of her going so far away for so long, emblematically weak in his powerlessness to protect her. It was true: Valerie was always much tougher than he was about letting Rebecca go, though as the indulged daughter of the indefatigable, always *Doctor* Eli Abelson—day or night, a man who never knew an upscale analytic hour he couldn't fill—she was the one who'd had the easier life.

It was really starting to rain now, to come down in sheets against the tinted glass—*plukhet* had been his mother's Slavic-sounding word for such a rain. The shuttle bus swung sharply westward down a steep hill and, at its bottom, round-

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ed a half-familiar-looking little corner playground; this was where they had to get off. To reach the clinic, even now in the pouring rain, they would have to walk all the way across the playground—an oddity he remembered from the two or three consults he had come here on in the past.

Yet the place suddenly felt familiar to him in a much older sense: it seemed to him that he had seen it, known it once when this drowned, scruffy playground had looked somehow different. That he had seen it before, in another light—well, of course another light, since he would've been a child then, but also literally another light: in sunlight, blazing sunlight. A high black iron railing? A fence? A steep something you had to climb. . . . This playground was more or less within shopping range of his grandmother's old neighborhood, so that would place it all the way back in his life, before he was even in first grade. Something you had to climb *down* from in a blazing sun and there was nothing to hold onto. A panicky, vertiginous throb brought back now, for a sickening instant, the fearful little boy he had been.

"This is us, Svetlana!" It made him lunge for his briefcase and umbrella. "This is us, and we don't want to miss it. The last stop on this route is a Jewish old-age home—and you can take that any way you want, come to think of it."

HE HAD hustled her out into the rain, but she had no raincoat or umbrella; she stood a little ahead of him now on the narrow, broken-up walkway to the playground, the lapels of her thin, open jacket held together with her fingers, as if this skimpy piece of cloth could protect her in such a downpour. Or as if, more likely, by *her* life's reckoning, no ordinary autumn rain like this could ever seem a threat.

"Zis consult you do now—how will it go?," her lilt carried back through the wind. "Ze clinic staff will present a severe case, *mmnn*, zeir *most* severe case, and you will interview patient?"

To make plain that his umbrella was meant for her as well, he took her elbow, and very gingerly, brought her close to him, so that, with her side pressed into his, he was guiding her around the playground's insidious, deep puddles, tracing, as they waded over the time-eliding municipal paving stones, the quicksilver fault lines of responsibility and desire. Sternly, he said, "You're not just along for the ride, you understand. It's your consult, too. You're here to evaluate the patient and formulate a treatment plan."

"But! You don't yet ask zat *I* will interview patient! Zat will be ab-*surde*, I think. Because I know—well! everyone has advised—zat patient-interviews with you are quite famous. Since, *mmnn*, often quite deeffeecoolt patients who will refuse to speak to another doctor—even for many sessions—*will* speak to you, zough you examine in conference before so many people."

So she'd already heard about him. "You get better at it with experience," he said, but that was a patronizing answer. Because he had been good at it from the start, and was considered, since the death of ancient Leon Ettinger—with his courtly, insinuating ways and remnant *Mitteleuropäisch* accent—the most skillful clinical interviewer among the senior people in the department. Even so, it pleased him, too much probably, that a brand-new, foreign resident would be so aware of his reputation.

They had been squishing through wet leaves, slipping and sliding over refuse-twisted mounds, nearly hand in hand and a little out of breath, really almost like children, when she said, abruptly, choppily, "Please, can you tell me, Dr. Go*rel*ick—what will be ze time when we return? Because I have at two-fiftyin psychopharm seminar with Dr. Einhorn. And he will be, well! Really not so plyeasant if you don't keep exactly his schedule."

Go*rel*ick. She had done it again, and with that pronunciation, so that it was no longer his ordinary two-syllable last name but the name of the town, the *shtetl*, he had known about all his life. A *shtetl* burned utterly to the ground in a pogrom, destroyed completely, its clutch of brutalized survivors left to struggle, soot-covered and stunned, over the muddy, rutted Belarussian roads till they arrived in Minsk so frightful a sight that the lot of them, taken in by the larger-town Jews, were always just called Gorelick. Forever. Identified forever by their origin of pathos. Those embers on the skin adhered beneath the surface for generations, he knew it. But when they were invisible, how did you decipher them? And when they were invisible, what did they instruct?

They had reached the series of small, dilapidated clinic buildings and were standing under the peeling overhang, squeezed in beside a row of parked takeout-delivery bikes. Distractedly, Dan said, "Not to worry, Svetlana. Einhorn's just a bully. Worse comes to worst, I'll have a little talk with him." But he owed her something more than that, didn't he, since Barry Einhorn's public humiliations of new women residents were notorious in the department. And she had come out of

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Russia: she had suffered enough. Now that she was delivered into his world, it was his obligation to protect her. But what if her history of hardships had so toughened her that she needed no protection? What if it was the soft life, the soft American life, *his* soft American life—marrying Valerie Abelson as a medical student, inheriting Eli Abelson's vast Central Park West apartment—that induced vulnerability?

There was no one to meet them as they headed into the clinic's dim waiting room, through the rank, rising odors of urine, disinfectant, and a stew of take-out foods; but not far down the corridor, a tall, gawky-looking woman stood peering out of an office doorway, one hand slid up in indolent greeting. She was eating pizza from a dripping wrapper, and, extending this toward them in a half-hearted suggestion of offer, she said in lifeless tones, "You guys from Rehab? I'm Madeline Derschlag, the Thursday conference-team leader." Vaguely, she waved them past her into the narrow office, where a rackety lunchtime crowd traipsed buffet-style around the long conference table, a white styrofoam flotilla of Chinese food steaming above its surface. "We ordered too much again. Take," the social worker shrugged. Then, with a cluck of irritation, she leaned forward to nudge the bulging case-file away from a teetering pizza carton, and a trailing piece of wrap stuck a tomatoey half-dollar oil-print on the front of her sweatshirt.

BUT THIS was already so wrong—and so badly, irredeemably wrong: the eating, the sweatshirt, the mistaken assumption about who they were, the gassy, public-institution stench of futility everywhere. He was the Russian girl's guide here, and nothing, absolutely nothing, was as it should be.

"No, no, All-City Adolescent. Dan Gorelick, All-City Adolescent," he fixed the slovenly social worker with a lingering, seductive smile and seized her unready hand. The woman did not even know who he was. "And this is my colleague, Dr. Starishefskaya."

"Please! No! Svetlana, Svetlana!," the Russian girl cried, her face lit up in a touching sunburst of sympathy. But the social worker was suddenly stung into panicky life. "Wait a second—*All-City Adolescent*? You came here from All-City Adolescent? You mean you're not here for the paraplegic? The Haitian guy caught in the drive-by shooting? Oh my God! What are you telling me? I just spent the whole week xeroxing spinal-cord injury abstracts for everyone! Plus, there's a Creole interpreter coming, and we're paying her taxi from Brooklyn! . . . Oh my God! You're not from Rehab! I don't believe it!"

First, it was essential to pacify her. Then, just so that he could conduct a decent interview with the patient he had come to see, he would have to enlist her in persuading the lot of them to get rid of the banquet. And all this in a way that would not lay him open to the charge of arrogance. "A superb clinician and excellent clinical teacher, but *unbelievably* arrogant, even when you allow for the elevated narcissism levels standard in Jewish male psychiatrists." This was the old, anonymous student evaluation which had so wounded him that no matter how many times Valerie talked him through it or around it, he could still feel its humiliating vibrations thrumming somewhere in his head. He had already begun to nod sympathetically when suddenly, from the Russian girl, there came, "But zis is not at *all* correct! *Not* a man with spinal-cord injury! A boy who comes out now from prison. And he is only *sev*entyin years."

They hadn't even been offered seats yet—were in fact, still in their wet coats—and there, in the face of the clamoring lunch line and the social worker's outraged stare, she was fishing out the yellow top sheet of the All-City Adolescent Evaluation Request packet, and proceeding to—*what*? She actually thought she could present a summary of the case? When she was from the consult team? And the summary had to come from the clinic people?

"Hector Nieves, seventyin age, male Hispanic, residing with mother and four smaller—*mmnn*, younger siblings. . . ." The entire presentation initiated ass-backward. In her risible, foreigner's English. And people wolfing down moo-shu pancakes practically on top of her head. "He has passed three months in prison island Rikers with charge, *mmnn*, assaults to teacher. But he denies. In prison, he does several times suicide attyempt, and tells to prison psychiatrist, Dr. Garcia, he is very often hearing voices. Zey bring him zen in infyirmary, and treat with neuroleptics. But I must regret we don't receive data for specifics of medications prescribed, *or* course of treatment. Now, post-release, he throws all medication in toilet, and does not return in school. Mother brings him here to Cross-Concourse Community Outreach because she tells he is hearing voices. But he denies. Cross-Concourse staff concludes 'much is unclear in ze clinical picture,' so you are writing request to All-City Adolescent, to

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us, to make evaluation. We come now to help," she looked up, with her graced, saddish smile. "*If* we will be able. Of course, well! we hope."

What was this—beginner's luck? A near-hush had settled over the airless little conference room as people scrambled into chairs and the buffet line vanished. Overhead, an old fluorescent lighting strip had begun to flicker; from somewhere down the corridor came a baby's wailing, and beneath it the muted, menacing seductions of a reggae song.

"Nieves. Right." The social worker gave the door a punishing slam. Expressionless now, she reached for the phone. "They'll have to bring him over from the residence."

IT WAS simply a fact, these days, when Dan went out on a consult, that people knew who he was. At least they had some idea. So that even if they'd never seen him interview a patient, they were aware, on the whole, that in the new standard textbook, the chapter on the treatment of adolescents with its distinctive urban-cum-community focus was his chapter. Which made this clinic, where nobody seemed to have heard a single thing about him—*dafka*, precisely, in his grandmother's old neighborhood—a little like landing on Mars. And of all days for that to happen, *dafka*—the dark-edged Yiddish word was flying out at him again—*dafka*, it had to be today, when the Russian girl was there. But why did that, above all, bother him so much? Why was *that* the piece that really mattered?

This was not the time to dance around with it. Moving briskly now, Dan threw his raincoat on a chair and turned to the group at the table—whoever they were: the balding, saturnine man in the corner packing in the chicken and broccoli, most likely a psychologist; the out-of-town, freckled redhead primly twirling up her sesame noodles, maybe an occupational therapist. He turned and made a little eye contact here and there, and then he said, "Look, I know this is not the case you guys are prepared to present. And that isn't fair. . . ." He was trying, above all, not to be heavy-footed. "But the fact is I wouldn't have anything useful to say about spinal-cord injury. So, suppose I interview the patient my skills *can* address, and we learn what we can together." The case folder was out of his briefcase now, but between the profusion of congealing food containers and the scatter of leaking soy-sauce envelopes, there was actually no place for him to put it down.

"I will *not* have people at this table—*mental-health professionals*—slurping in the patient's face while I'm attempting to engage him in difficult material. I don't work that way." That's how the words burst out of his mouth, *dafka* as they were bringing in the patient.

"C'mon in, Hector." Christ, what a beginning. To come out with a lame, schmucky opener like that when in fact the boy was already standing there four-square in the doorway, his head cocked in brittle challenge, his slight body truculently planted. So that his initial observing gaze should not seem a taunt that the kid meet his eyes, Dan, taking a leaf from the late Leon Ettinger, pulled off his reading glasses and began to play, idly, with the earpieces. His smile had a purposely absent cast as he said, "I'm Dan Gorelick. I'm an adolescent psychiatrist. So I'm the guy who comes around to help out when the folks here feel someone your age is having a rough time." And his nod even skirted indifference as he gestured toward the empty patient's chair by his side: the last thing to do here—there was something in the swaggering, aggrieved hunch of the boy's narrow shoulders that gave warning—would be to offer him the provoking touch of an extended hand.

Still the kid remained glued to the threshold. Finally, in a defiant but phlegm-thickened and just barely audible tone, his wary eyes dredging the floor tiles, the frail slash of his mustache slanting upward in a near-sneer, he muttered, "I din *do* nuthin. And they ain nuthin *wrong* wimme neither."

To acknowledge the kid's discomfort and maybe even provide him some beginning margin of ease, Dan angled his chair toward the doorway, gently saying, "So . . . why don't I just do myself a favor and get the hell out of your face, is that it? Like, go find some *other* kid out there to bother—say in Brooklyn, Manhattan, wherever."

But nothing in the boy's sallow face altered: not a glimmer of a smile, not a flicker of curiosity; nothing. Mute, he just stood there in the doorway, locked in the confusions of his outfit—oversized dark, hooded sweatshirt, low-slung beltless pants, laceless hightops. That universal teenage uniform, which transformed the confiscated belts and laces of a jailhouse suicide-watch into fashion, had become the automatic choice of a kid who had actually served three months inside.

Finally, almost as if it were involuntary, the boy shrugged. And in that listless, single-shoulder shrug Dan saw a gesture of such hopelessness that he leaned toward him, too intently saying, "Look, Hector, you've had *some* heavy load of troubles

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lately, no doubt about it. That's why I'm here to talk with you today—to see how we can help you turn things around."

A cocky, derisive smirk prowled across the boy's bony face, as from somewhere under the recesses of his sweatshirt he pulled out a take-out container of fried rice and, with the same seeming sleight-of-hand revealing a plastic spoon, slowly, tauntingly, began to eat. In this bravado posture, spooning the food into his mouth—at first taking prolonged, suggestive licks and then at each swallow erupting into grunting, mock gag-spasms—he mooched his way over to the empty chair. Slumping down, he pushed all the way back and scraped the chair around toward the doorway, so that only the most determined interviewer would be able to catch more than a hint of his profile.

"Lunchtime, huh?" Dan said, with a sigh. "Wha'cha got there?" Because they always had to *dare* you to like them, these troubled, in-trouble kids he traveled around the city to see, and it was a dare he always had to take up, a test he always had to pass—even when there was nobody special observing, no Russian girl with her measuring, apprentice eye. "So what'd you order, Hector?" he persisted, as if passing the time of day with a neighbor. "Anything you'd say I should try some time? Anything really good?"

Belching loudly, the boy stretched himself all the way out on the chair, apparently taking a breather, though his left leg had begun an impatient, pressured series of circling movements, and he had his eyes locked on a point above the door frame, as if an invisible clock up there might, at any moment, toll his release. Finally, grudgingly, his back to Dan, in a hoarse voice, he muttered, "Rice. I got rice. . . . With all that *littue* shit they oweez putting."

"D'you *like* Chinese food, Hector? Is it something you look forward to—a thing you're glad to get?"

The boy again eked out an oppressed, one-shoulder shrug. "I don mind." But then, almost as if he'd forgotten his own rule, he made a slight shift of his head. "Chinese people littue, right? But they *strong*. Like Bruce Lee? . . . Shit. He could *kick*."

Bingo! Martial arts—it came with the territory. "So Bruce Lee is a guy you admire. What's your favorite martial art? *Your* best one, I mean?"

"*Bruce Lee*. . . ." His face contorted into a disgusted snicker, the boy suddenly shot all the way around, his eyes meeting Dan's for the first time. "Bruce Lee *dead*, you din even *know* that? Shit! Even Brandon Lee? The son? He dead, too."

"Let me get this straight, Hector. If somebody's dead, that means you can't admire them?"

"If somebody dead, they dead. Thass it."

"That's it? Really? That's just it? Do you mean that if somebody's dead, you wouldn't ever miss them, you wouldn't ever think about them?"

"They ain here no more, right? They ain *doin* nuthin."

"Whew! You're some tough customer. . . ."

Of course this was almost certainly bravado; still, it paved the way for him to bring in an essential element of the evaluation request: an assessment of suicidality. Carefully, musingly, Dan started, "Ever get a kind of funny feeling when somebody's dead? Like, well, yeah, right, they're dead. . . . Right, they're not *here* any more. But y'know what? Maybe, *could* be, they're really better off. Maybe, *could* be, they're in a better place."

The boy had spooned up another high mound of fried rice; leadenly, he sat studying it. "Maybe *some* people, . . ." he said finally. "But lotsa people, where they at, could be worser."

"And what about you, Hector? You must have had some thoughts about that. Where did you think *you* were gonna end up when you tried to kill yourself—how many times was it? Three times? Four times?" Dan made a rapid scan of the file before him. "When you made all those suicide attempts at Rikers?"

A harsh laugh issued out of the boy's mouth as, showily now, he dangled the overloaded spoon in the air, as if preparing to shoot it out at the assembled conference team. "Shit, not *dead*, man. I wasn never gonna be no *dead* sucker."

Dead suckers. It hit him abruptly now—and how could he have missed it? Probably it was all the dead suckers of Dan's own, not-so-dim, unresting mental cemetery—from his own flawed parents to the ravaged refugees of Gorelick to all the starved-out Minsk Jews herded into a Belarussian ravine in the very same year he sat banging a clumsy spoon in a highchair in the Bronx—probably it was *these* dead suckers whose unsparing eyes he felt somehow watching him, judging him now in the keenly attentive person of the young Russian doctor. And that was irrational. But really, really irrational.

"Rikers," Dan gathered himself together to remark in an offhanded way. "From what I've heard, that's a pretty scary place."

The boy took in a mouthful of fried rice. "To

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you, maybe. I had my *brothers*." With a swaggering gesture, he fingered the gang-color beads around his neck.

"Y'know something, Hector? You're 100-percent right. To me, it *would* be scary. In fact, if I had to be in a place like that, I think I would feel so scared, so really *down*, I don't know what I would do. . . . I would probably have some of the same feelings you talked about with Dr. Garcia."

"Shit, *that* stupid faggot? *He* din care. That dude just oweez playin head games wichu. He din know *nuthin*."

It came to Dan then. Making a casual gesture toward the Russian girl in the chair on his other side, he said, "Y'know, Dr. Starishefskaya over here comes from a country where lots and lots of people, innocent people, were in jail all the time. So she might be able to understand certain things about your experience that guys like Dr. Garcia—or me—would need a little more time to figure out."

OF COURSE she was not wearing makeup, and the lighting in the room was poor, still it seemed to Dan that her face had become ashen as she looked up hesitantly, almost fearfully, at him and then, in a determined, split-second switch, directly at the boy. Haltingly, with her melting, liquid cadences, out-of-rhythm stresses, and formal, sympathetic tones—in fact, sounding nearly as foreign as a Martian—she began, "*When* people are taken in prison, or, *mmnn*, in camps, and zey know, of course, zey have done no crime, zey will feel—well! *Mmnn*, many, many quite terrible fears and anxieties. Many, many *very* unhappy thoughts. . . ."

"So? Thass *them*, right? It ain *me*." His left leg again started jerkily circling.

"Zey will have—I can say I believe *every* person, strong or sick, young or old, all, all will suffer periods of very deep depression, of very great despair. So perhaps, some time, you, too, Hector, have had such periods. . . ."

"*Periods*! Shit, what she think? I'm a girl? A faggot? I don get no *periods*, lady! Man, this dumb bitch don even know howta *talk*!"

Before Dan could do something, anything, to extract her, she was plunging right ahead. "I *know* you don't like to talk to me now. Of *course*. . . ." She was soothing, coaxing him, her lilt a near-lullaby. "To talk to a doctor you don't know, well! it's very, very deefeecult. But, *mmnn*, so we can help you, Hector, so we give, for your *future*, all opteemum—"

"Shit, I don need no *help*, Miss! I just needa get outa here. I just needa go *home*."

"But at home, Mother has many worries about you, I think. First, zat you don't go any more in school, and zen, of course she must worry, *when* she knows her dyear young son will hear often voices."

The boy blew out a brutal, hooting, car-horn laugh. "Shit, you don *know*?" He was talking only to Dan now. "My mother boyfriend? The old one? That fat Dominican scum that come back? He oweez hafta have a *attitude* wimme, that sucker. I swear, he on her back about me twenny-four seven. So, right, she afraid he gonna bounce? So she brung me over here, and she start alla her bullshit *cryin* and evvything. . . . And she just psychin alla these *staffs*," he gave a scornful wave at the crowded conference table, "that I got *this* problem, and I got *that* problem. . . ." He shrugged. "It ain really gonna *do* nuthin for her to put me here. She know it. Fatshit gonna quit her again soon, anyway."

So the kid had decided to open up to him a little. But how was this anything like the kind of deep, empathic connection that he had above all wished the Russian girl to see? It was past time to get tough. "So none of this stuff we've been hearing about you is true, is that what you're telling me? Never get into any real bad, angry moods—when everything just sucks? Never have anything come into your mind about hurting yourself, killing yourself? C'mon, Hector!" Dan pushed him. "This whole deal sounds like some dude you never even heard of? None of it sounds like you?" And very quietly now, as if trying to slip in under the radar, "No voices, Hector? . . . You're honestly telling me you never heard any voices?"

"Shit, how come you gotta say it like they was a *thousanda* them?" A strangely plaintive note had suddenly crept in—the sound of a young child's offended protest. "Maybe one time I did. Thass one. One time. *Maybe*."

Gently, with a casually-pitched intimate croon that could, he knew, even in a crowded conference interview, melt away all the superfluous others in a room, he asked, "What was the voice telling you, Hector?"

"I don know." Scowling, dismissive, the boy turned away. "I don member shit like that."

"But when you heard it, who'd you think it was?" Dan pressed. "Was it a man's voice? A woman's? Did it sound like anyone you know?"

"I don *believe* you, man, I swear! You think I

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posed to member one littue stupid voice I *maybe* heard a couple times in Rikers? When they oweez so much shit goin down over there? God!"

There was genuine flame, now, in the boy's eyes as he turned back to Dan, seething, the wild, prickling flame of true engagement: finally, finally. "So how'd you get yourself into a place like that anyway?"

"I *bin* tellin you—I din do *nuthin*."

He was only seventeen, after all—a child, a scant two years younger than his own daughter. "Suppose you just tell me what they *say* you did," Dan cajoled. "The prosecution—the D.A.'s guys."

"That *girl*, you mean? That littue skinny bitch D.A.?" With a defiant sneer, he spat out a long-range hissing wad, at last blandly shrugging, "Beat up . . . a teacher. . . . But I din do *nuthin* to that nigger. I wasn there."

"Not *there*? C'mon, Hector! What're you telling me?" Dan had leaned so far sideways that his jacket sleeve grazed the top of the kid's sneaker. "The blues just plucked you out of thin air?"

Scowling, the boy made a point of moving his chair away. "I was *there*, okay? In the schoolyard?. . . But I wasn *there*. Next to the weights and shit. Where evveyone be beating on him." He picked up the fried-rice container, and scraped out a hardened spoonful. "I was like, you know . . . just hanging."

"But why were people beating on him, d'you think? What d'you think it was? A diss? An argument? What d'you think happened?"

Suddenly, an undisguised smirk taking over his face, the boy extended a crafty, gloating gaze all the way around the crowded table. "I *think* . . . that dude got hisself hurt."

"How bad, would you say?"

"I don know. . . . Yo, you wanna know how come the fuckin five-o's pulled me? Cause they *seen* me, shit. Cause, right, I din run away? Shit, I din have no *reason* to run away. I din *do* nuthin."

"Do me a favor, then, Hector. Explain something to me. Why did you plead guilty?"

"My lawyer," the boy shrugged. "Thass what the sucker tole me."

"As a plea bargain, you mean? Because you couldn't make bail?"

"Cause probbly the *judge* be tellin him, *I* don know."

The conference hour was fast running out; it was probably Dan's last real chance to reach the boy—to offer him, however briefly, an authentic human connection, not simply one more futile psychiatric wrangle. "So even though he was *your* lawyer, you didn't feel he was really on your side. . . . Who was, then, Hector? Who was there to take up for you?" On purpose using the street expression, Dan was speaking softly, leaning forward—while taking care not to encroach on the kid's implicitly staked-out turf, when suddenly the conference-room door jerked open, and a broad-faced, cocoa-skinned woman peered in. Bedecked in a lime-green turban and a bright flower-patterned rain slicker, she said, with a smile, in a distinct Franco-Caribbean lilt, "Par*don*, I am late, I know. But the first tax*i*, he had a flat. Phtt! And we are stuck on the Belt, in the rain—so what can I do but wait and hope for another?"

"Oh! Mrs. Antoine! Of course!" The tall social worker sprang to the doorway, muttering, "My God, *two* taxis, yet! And now a third one to take her back to Brooklyn, and the whole thing out of *my* budget, and all of it completely down the drain."

It was a total violation of the hallowed safe therapeutic space, and of the mood Dan had worked so hard to set up, yet the Creole interpreter, with her vivid colors and jaunty entrance, had wafted in, for a mere count of seconds, a startling, reminiscent fragrance of the city's ordinary life. But that was not the universe Dan had chosen to work in. Already, he could sense the desultory crackle of tin-foil and styrofoam as the clinic staff began to clear away their lunch leavings: time to wind up. With luck, what he might still be able to wrest from this botch—above all, for the sake of the Russian girl—would be a brief, clarifying case discussion.

Once more, then, Dan addressed himself to the patient, but hurriedly now, and on automatic pilot. "I know it's not easy for people to make that trip out to Rikers. Just about everyone gets pretty freaked about the searches. So, anyone come to see you when you were in jail, Hector? Mother?"

"Naah. . . ." The kid was sitting with his chair tipped all the way back, a diffuse, bored, owlish glare on his face. "She oweez busy with the littue kids and evveything. Plus she got that fat asshole Wilberto."

"Father? Ever get to see him?"

His chair slid down with a thud, all the street-swagger drained out of his expression. Staring downward, he said, in a muffled voice, "My biological, you mean? I think I maybe seen him a few times when I was littue. . . . Like *real* littue? But I

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don know where he at now. California, Pennsylvania, someplace like that."

This? Now? When there was no time now to explore it? No time? "How about your girlfriend? She stand by you? She turn up?"

"My *ex*? *Lisa*? You crazy? Shit, she oweez be playin me anyway. Fum *before* they put me over there."

"Sounds like a whole lot of people've let you down lately," Dan was now neatly speeding toward the finish, when out of nowhere, the boy brightened. "Yo, you wanna know who brung me something? Not over there—in Rikers. I mean she brung me it *here*. Like last week?... This girl? Jasmine? My organization sister? Well—she oney like around thirteen probbly. Anyway, *her*? Jasmine? She brung me a bear."

"A teddy bear?"

"Yeah—no. Not ezackly. Cause, right, teddy bears be brown? And littue? With like they littue *eyes*? . . . *My* bear—shit! My bear big! I mean *real* big! Humongous! With like this big *mouf*." Drawing out the word in wonder, the boy deftly mimed a huge snout. "And plus he *white*—alla him! His ears, his feet, his tail—his *evveythings*. I swear! The whole fuckin bear just white!"

"A polar bear," Dan restrained a smile.

"Yeah. . . . A polo bear. Like—fum the zoo. Right? *They* got them."

Bemused now, even though he knew there was no time, Dan said, "D'ja give him a name?"

"He awready *got* a name. Fum her. When she brung him. Cause she was like, 'Yo, here go your bear. Here go your Snowy.'"

"Hector! She named him after *you*!" Dan nearly shouted. "Nieves—Snowy!" Though, of course, for all he knew the bear was stuffed with cocaine, and named for that.

"Yeah. . . . *Yeah!* . . ." A child's inward, delighted, uncensored smile had begun to play on his bony face, as for the first time he let himself relax deeply into the chair, all his surly defensiveness for the moment eroded. And it was nearly heartrending, this rapt, astonished, little-boy smile, even if a glint of slyness still lay recessed in its corners—even if, altogether, you could never call it innocent. All of a sudden, then, the kid was out of his seat. "Yo, Ismael!," he called to the burly, head-shaven attendant waiting in the doorway. "I could go upstairs and get him? My bear? To show the doctor? . . . Or hold up!," he spun back around, grabbing onto Dan's chair, his eyes shooting out a wild, pleading intensity. "You could come wimme, Doctor? You could come to my room and see my Snowy bear?"

THIS—THIS moment, the spark of human connection, that possibility always, no matter the limitations of the interview setting, or even the patient himself—this was what Dan was going for every time, what he believed in absolutely. In terms of treatment, admittedly, it was only the barest beginning. Yet it *was* a beginning—and it had just happened. He had just done it. This was what he had wished the Russian girl to see.

"There's nothing I'd like better, Hector," Dan spoke from the heart. "But unfortunately our time is just about up now. Maybe another time. . . ." And he gave him this sop, normally so much against the grain, only because the moment was so charged. Since how would there be another time? This was a one-shot consult, and the interview was essentially over.

"Anyone in the team like to contribute a question?" Dan had to go through the charade of searching all the way around the conference table. "No?" No, naturally not, in a place like this: with lunch packed away, what they most likely wanted was to get out of the conference as soon as possible.

"*Mmnn*, if it will be possible, Dr. Gore*l*ick, yes, I would like to ask. . . ."

Of course. Who else? Dan tapped his watch, and signaled her with his eyebrows.

"But *one* question only," the Russian girl turned her quick delicate smile from Dan to the boy. "I know you don't like to go in school, Hector. . . . But, *mmnn*, put it on *zis* way—do you think, perhaps sometime, zere can be something you will *wish* to study?"

"Shit, yeah—I *bin* studyin. *Oweez*. Since I'm like, I don know—three years old! . . . Karate. Judo. Kung fu. Tae kwon do. I could do *alluvem*. I could fight *anyone*. Shit, you don know? I *oweez* be doin my exercises! I *oweez* be practicin my moves! God, lady! I swear! Can't you tell *nuthin*? How you think I could look so *dieseled* anyway?"

With a violent, glowering swerve, he heaved himself away, but at the same time, and urgently, he was seeking Dan's eyes. "My grandmother? She dead—thass sad, right? She useta have this picture? Like next to alla her God pictures? It was me, when I'm like three years old, and we having Christmas? Me, with this, like, real, real *big* dude? And we *both* doin karate, and we *both* wearin all the same shit? I mean *evveything!* The robe, the belt, the sandals—evveything ezackly the same!"

Every single minute now meant time taken

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away from whatever little still remained for the case discussion—but how could Dan not acknowledge a communication of this magnitude?

"Your first karate teacher," he said, smiling, and maybe because it was impossible for him not to summon up that snapshot—he had, after all, seen so many: the faded, out-of-focus polaroid, the tawdry, half-furnished, tinsel-scattered holiday room, the flushed, leaping, gleaming-eyed toddler for whom things had not yet Gone Wrong—maybe it was the terrible clarity of this image that made him add now, so rashly, "Who was he?"

"I don know," the boy shrugged. "Some big dude who be hangin withem then."

Already, before it was even out of his mouth, he knew what a disaster he was setting in motion, but he couldn't help himself. "Ever wonder if he was your father?"

"I din wonder *nuthin*, man! You don know *nuthin* about me, you don understand *nuthin*!" The boy, his dull truculence abruptly hard-wired into rage, lurched to his feet. With a lunge at Dan's briefcase, he spat out, "You come over here with alla your stupid *papers* and shit, and you just think you *so* slick! *Lookin* at me all the time, axin me alla your *bull*shit questions, oweez acting so *big*. . . . But you don know *nuthin* about people like me. I mean *nuthin*. Fuck it, man, in a littue while, you getting into your badass BMW, and you going home to your nice littue house with trees and shit in, like, New *Jersey*! . . . And yo, *yo*, motherfucker! You posed to figger out shit about *me*? Don make me laugh, sucker! You don understand *nuthin*."

It was not the first time Dan had faced such a scene. Quickly waving away the hulking, medallioned attendant who had instantly made a move to intercede, he sat, a solid minute, just meeting the boy's eyes. Finally, in solemn tones, he said, "Well, you got *that* one right, didn't you? . . . Maybe not everything about the house and the car . . . but the rest? Well. . . . I don't ever claim my life is like yours. I don't say I've had your difficulties."

Awkwardly, his head down, the boy was already taking some faltering steps backward, as if half-wishing to sit down again, but fearful he might lose face or be seen to stumble.

"Though, I hope you believe me, Hector, everyone—and I mean *everyone*—myself included, has plenty of stuff they've had to go up against."

"Whachu *mean?*" the kid, still half-standing, now leaned cockily astride the chair's edge.

"I mean nobody gets away free. Life isn't like that."

"Whachu mean *free?*" Scowling, with a wary, but furtively intrigued squint, he slid back down into his seat.

So quickly had the sense of menace evaporated that there were already a few people—the chicken-and-broccoli psychologist, a ringleted, very thin young social worker—who were starting to get up and collect their things. But much *too* quickly for such a turnaround: this miracle was impossible—Dan knew it. And it dawned on him then, in that queasy moment, that Hector Nieves, first with his electric display of rage and again with his blink-of-an-eye mollification, was in fact desperately maneuvering to prolong the contact between them. *By any means*. A classic attempt at manipulation, granted. But wasn't it also—you had to consider the wish, the underlying wish—a strategy of hope?

Leaning forward to answer, Dan was aware of a surge of liberated warmth. "Let me tell you an old Jewish saying, Hector. 'Everybody lugs around his own pack of troubles.' *Everybody*. . . . Only right now what you've got is a very heavy load. Much too heavy. For anyone." Here and there around the table, people were getting up and slipping out the door, but Dan didn't care. There was still one thing left he could do for this boy: explain honestly, face-to-face, his own diagnostic recommendation. Gently, he began, "Y'know how you told me just before that I don't really understand you? Well, there are times it isn't possible to understand a lot about a person when you only get to talk to them once. And after all," he was trying hard now to catch the boy's eye, "you're a pretty complicated guy, I think you know it. . . . That's why I'm recommending to the people here that you go into the hospital for a little while. So the doctors there *can* get to know you better, and help set you on the right track."

Slowly, with a bobbing, sniggering nod, the boy stood up, and tossing a disgusted, ritual afterkick at his chair, loped off to the door. "Donchu even *know*?," he looked back, a corner of his upper lip so derisorily curled that the jagged fuzz of his mustache was reduced to a paint-set smudge. "You can't put me away *no*place, Jewboy! Cause I oweez just gonna *get out!*"

"You don't want to make it easy for me to help you, do you, Hector?" But there was hardly anyone left in the room by now; this time the interview was really over.

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THE SHUTTLE bus going back downtown was already packed with nurses, mostly Filipina, coming off-duty, and it was a relief, in a way, to feel the wash of their completely alien, hard-consonant chatter. Except because it was the "small" bus—from a dilapidated, out-of-town fleet the medical center had picked up cheap somewhere—it had seats that faced backward, like the old Jerome-Woodlawn elevated trains of Dan's youth. Now, as he sat opposite the Russian girl and they weaved along the hilly, puddled, once-familiar streets—in Dan's memory filled everywhere with green: trees, shrubs, bushes, hedges, empty lots wild with rotted tree stumps and coarse, stalky grasses—even through windows that were stuck shut the smell of muddy, overgrown vegetation after heavy rain was so pungent, so palpable, it gave him the uncanny sensation of not merely facing backward in the bus but of watching his life, with all its screw-ups, scroll back in time. A phantom smell, like the pain of a phantom limb.

The Russian girl was not looking out the window but instead peered hesitantly at him. "I hope I may ask you, Dr. Gor*e*lick. . . . I know you recommend for zis boy admission to hospital. But ze multiple suicide attyempts he is making in prison—well! . . . Zese, I think he does because he knows zey will put in infyirmary, no? . . . So he will have, *mmnn*, a not so severe regime."

A shiver of the Lubyanka, of icy, eternal prison-house Russia arose even from her casual professional observation, though what she might have experienced of that domain he didn't know—nor did he feel he could ask. In fact, what he had wanted to ask her, he realized—and badly—was if she knew the story of Gorelick, of the burnt *shtetl*, of his name. But what was that asking, really? If the embers still showed on him? If she could see them?

Brusquely, he conceded, "Probably he thought it would be easier to avoid rape that way. And for all I know, he was right." And so sententiously then—though all he had meant to do was explain—"in any case, my criteria for in-patient evaluation tend to be determined by broader clinical considerations."

Where were they now, anyway? Somewhere in the East Bronx? The South Bronx? Highbridge, was this? Mott Haven? Morrisania? Not a place he knew at all. But it came over him anyway; it came over him as it did every time: the melancholy which crept down from the rooftops of ruined neighborhoods. Like a sooty, disintegrating tarpaulin, it spread over windows and fire escapes, sidewalks and storefronts, bus stops and fire hydrants—everywhere silting, relentlessly silting, till all he could see was a grit-shedding cover of mourning. And it wasn't only the flown-away past that he mourned, but also the squandered now.

They were already crossing the Triborough—practically back in Manhattan—when the rain stopped entirely, and a few random slivers of sunlight in the window blinked his reflection. Only there, as he turned to take it in, was the blanched, bewildered image of his mild, failed father.

There was a sob wrenching through him, he knew that—in its raw, blood-sharpness, probably closer to a howl; he kept swallowing as hard as he could, but the thing was, he couldn't actually swear it hadn't come out of his mouth.

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The Price of Managed Care

Bruce A. Barron

MOSTLY AS the result of a concatenation of unplanned and uncoordinated events, American medicine today is undergoing a tumultuous economic restructuring. The engine driving this process goes by the name of managed care, a movement whose precepts lay behind the abortive attempt by President Clinton to bring the entire American system of medicine under the regulatory control of government. Although the Clinton plan came to nothing, managed care itself has grown by leaps and bounds, with consequences for the medical profession, and hence for patients, that we are only now beginning to apprehend.

UNTIL THE day before yesterday, the practice of medicine in the United States was a cottage industry. Physicians acted as independent contractors, entrepreneurs who managed the medical care provided to their patients in offices and hospitals. Theirs was essentially a retail service business, although differing from most such businesses in one crucial respect: over time, an increasing portion of physicians' incomes came not from patients themselves but from "third-party payers" like insurance companies. These payers learned what they had to remit to the doctor only upon receiving a claim. Basing themselves on an aggregate of such claims, insurance carriers calculated the premiums they needed to charge in order to stay in business.

After World War II, medical-insurance premiums became, in many cases, a benefit assumed by employers on behalf of their employees. But since the person receiving the care was not paying for it directly, and since neither of the interested parties, employer or insurer, had a significant voice in determining the cost of care, the system was without effective economic controls. Eventually, in an attempt to institute limits and rein in costs, insurance carriers established a range of "reasonable and customary fees" for specific services. (Physicians, of course, remained free to accept or not to accept these fees as payment in full.)

This, then, was the formal structure underlying what is known as fee-for-service medicine. As it happens, however, the elements of this structure were being put into place during a period—roughly, the last half-century—when medicine itself was growing by huge increments every year, undergoing a metamorphosis from cottage industry to big business. At $900 billion a year, that business is now the largest single sector of the American economy, and the costs associated with it are staggering.

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These costs, and not any dissatisfaction with the quality of medical care available, are what is now said to be the major catalyst behind the movement to rethink the relationship of physician and patient, physician and hospital, and physician and payer. In part that may be so. But the particular *form* in which change is now taking place was fatefully dictated by one of those unplanned and uncoordinated events to which I alluded at the outset, namely, the descent of the pivotal institution of the industry—the academic medical center—into financial straits. And thereby hangs a tale.

THANKS TO federal programs initiated after World War II, an explosive growth took place in hospitals and medical centers attached to university schools of medicine. Within a very short period of time, these centers became intricate organizations, charged with a tripartite mission of research, education, and patient care. As the resources addressed to them multiplied, and both institutions and physicians shared the increasing wealth, more and more hospitals sought medical-school affiliation, the hospitals themselves grew larger, and the entire complex became the force driving American medicine forward.

In addition to its hospital, a typical academic medical center today includes a medical school, a dental school, a nursing school, and training programs for paramedical specialists like physical therapists, occupational therapists, and the like. It usually also includes research institutes for selected diseases such as cancer or heart disease, and often boasts special units for the clinical care of certain groups of patients—a women's hospital, a children's hospital, an eye institute. The size of these centers may be gleaned from the fact that the Presbyterian Hospital in New York City, which is the clinical arm of the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, has an annual budget in excess of $1 billion. This is hardly an atypical figure.

The finances of these centers in their heyday were very complicated, with revenues coming from different sources and few if any fiscal controls. Full-time clinical faculty members—i.e., physicians who taught at a medical school and practiced medicine only at that school's affiliated hospital—were paid a salary deriving from two sources: fees generated from their practice, and research grants. In return, clinical faculty were expected to teach medical students and staff, to share the responsibility of providing care to the indigent population served by the hospital, and to concede a portion of their practice income to their clinical department. This was considered a tithe in return for the opportunity to be involved in the center's educational and research activities and to enjoy a challenging and diverse practice.

The rewards for the hospital and medical-school administrations were likewise very great. The clinical faculty acted as a magnet for patients who filled beds, and the research they conducted attracted funds from a variety of government agencies. Since the money earned by the faculty was passed through the university accounts, and since medical schools are not-for-profit organizations, the part retained by them after paying faculty salaries was not subjected to any government tax. Moreover, every research grant included a sum for overhead costs paid directly to the institution; in the 1960's, the overhead charged by medical schools ran at about 20 percent of the total award, and constituted no small part of the operating budgets of most medical schools.

THOSE WERE the halcyon days. In time, however, the financial underpinnings of the system became stressed. By the mid-70's, government research funds had become scarce, and medical schools found themselves having to compensate by increasing the institutional tax on monies earned by faculty in patient care. This shift—from dependence on revenue from research to dependence on revenue from practice—proved to be just the first in a whole series of changes. Where, for instance, indigent patients were once treated on a voluntary basis, money for this service was now collected through the Medicaid program, and the funds billed in the physician's name were most often retained by the medical school. Yet this, too, soon proved inadequate to correct growing deficits, and so the charge added to grant applications for indirect costs was increased—at many centers, it now exceeds 100 percent.

As all this was happening in the medical-school component of the centers, the hospital component was itself facing a shrinking revenue base. Thanks to new technologies, many surgical procedures could now be done on an out-patient basis, and patients who required hospitalization did not need to stay so long. An even more profound effect issued from the growth of such diverse subspecialties as joint replacement and arthroscopic surgery in the field of orthopedic surgery and the treatment of high-risk or infertile patients in obstetrics and gynecology. By producing a constant

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stream of high-tech specialists and sending them out into the world, the centers inadvertently facilitated the transformation of many a community hospital into a competing medical complex. Yet the number of patients who required such high-tech care was always circumscribed. Thus began the increasingly desperate effort to recruit patients from outside the centers' usual catchment areas. The competition was, and remains, fierce: even the prestigious Johns Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore now advertises for patients in New York City.

In the late 1980's the government added another blow by modifying its comparatively open-handed approach to payment for services to Medicare and Medicaid patients. "Precertification" procedures cut down on the number of patients being admitted and the duration of their hospital stays. Soon the companies writing policies and administering insurance programs for the non-Medicare population (those under the age of sixty-five or not disabled) followed suit. The ensuing shortfall severely reduced the ability of hospitals to repay the huge sums of money they had borrowed from the federal government for capital investment in growth.

IT TOOK some time before the centers confronted their budgetary problems. Because of their insulation from true market forces, many of them did not even have accurate accounting processes in place. If asked, a chief financial officer could probably tell you what his hospital charged for a CAT scan or an hour in the operating room, and perhaps what the hospital was reimbursed for those services. But he would almost certainly have been unable to specify the cost to the hospital itself of providing these or other services, since his accounting system used surrogate measures for costs. This was like a restaurateur listing a price on the menu for dinner without knowing what it cost him to put the food on the plate and serve it.

It was their fiscal weakness, a condition brought upon them by their own actions, which eventually made the centers prey in the 1990's to the designs of American corporate managers, who were well aware of what was happening to the balance sheet of even the most prestigious teaching institutions and recognized an opportunity when they saw one. Because of the fragility of their financial condition, the centers were in no position to strike a hard bargain either with the large employers who controlled the patients upon whom they depended or with the insurance carriers who now were able to set almost by fiat what would be paid for the services the centers provided. Feeling their power shifting away, some centers rushed to form partnerships with managed-care companies solely in order to survive. But whether they did so or not, the consequence of the new reality in which they found themselves was a dramatic loss of autonomy.

So began the wholesale overhaul of what had been, until then, the best medical-care service in the world.

FOR WHAT exactly *is* managed care? Operationally, it is not a mechanism for managing care at all; it is a mechanism for managing costs. This is, theoretically, a relatively simple goal to achieve.

Thus, if our purpose is to place a cap on the number of dollars we spend on medical care, one option is to reduce the total number of "units" of care delivered. A second is to reduce the cost of each of those units. And a third is to eliminate coverage for or place restrictions on the use of certain units of care, such as organ transplantation or the treatment of infertility. Thanks to managed care, we are now pursuing a combination of all three of these options.

To be sure, insurance carriers routinely deny that by reducing costs we are also cutting into the quality or the amount of care available. Thus, one hears that the real problems are overutilization, fraud, and abuse, and that when these are brought under control, the dollars saved will be sufficient to rein in the normal rate of increase in the cost of care. Yet even under the most extravagant estimate, it is highly unlikely that the savings generated from the elimination of bad habits will achieve the stated goal. In the meantime, the fact is that we *are* limiting the services that are provided; we *are* reducing payments to those who provide such services; and we *are* restricting the choices of those who require care.

By now, most of us have heard some of the ever-multiplying anecdotes about the effects of managed care on the practice of medicine; taken in sum, they suggest the outline of our present situation. In many managed-care programs, the amount of time for patient-physician contact has been significantly curtailed and the level of clinical training required for a given task has been redefined downward. Patient care is provided by midwives instead of obstetricians, by nurse practitioners instead of pediatricians, by psychologists instead of psychiatrists. The relationship between physicians

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and hospitals has also been affected. No hospital can afford to have a surgeon on staff who is not cost-conscious; following reimbursement formulas negotiated with managed-care companies, administrators will frown on a doctor who wants to keep his patient in the hospital for an extra day or who orders an expensive test. (There are, to be sure, counterpressures as well, as witness the public furor over restrictions on the length of in-hospital stay for women giving birth.)

As for the clinical effects, one need only ask who interprets the medical guidelines for managed-care programs. Advertisements for the job of Clinical Case Manager or Clinical Disease Pathway Director stipulate a degree in nursing as the required credential. Nurses, then, are empowered to make many of the critical clinical decisions once made by physicians. For their part, physicians participating in such programs are implicitly instructed not to deviate from the company's guidelines, lest they be removed from the program. Under newer forms of compensation known as capitation and risk-sharing—whereby a fixed fee is paid to the physician for each patient in his care—the disincentive to depart from actuarially-driven protocols is even greater. Meanwhile, managed-care programs insist that they themselves bear no liability in the event of malpractice, since they are acting solely as the agents of the purchaser (in the vast majority of cases, the employer).

FOR THE patient, the implications of all this are potentially very dire. Five years ago, a sixty-three-year-old woman on medication for high blood pressure and diabetes and in need of a surgical procedure would, on the authority of her physician and surgeon, routinely be admitted to a hospital the day before her operation. Sometimes this was done for the patient's convenience, but in most cases there was a sound clinical basis for it. The patient could be evaluated in the immediate pre-operative period to verify that her hypertension and blood sugar were in good control, and the surgeon could give her intravenous fluids and medication if indicated. The patient also had an opportunity to meet the anesthesiologist and the nurses who would care for her in the post-operative period. The staff, in turn, was able to gain some familiarity with her clinical history and current medical condition, and all such information, recorded on her chart, would be available to the surgeon who was about to take responsibility for her life, thereby reducing the likelihood that some relevant finding would be missed or overlooked.

Today, that same patient will report to the admitting office three hours before the scheduled surgery, change her clothes, and go directly to the operating room. How will she have been accepted into the hospital in the first place? Her physician will have justified her admission to a staff member of a managed-care company. This person, usually a nurse without specialty training or relevant clinical experience, sits in front of a computer containing programs and general questions pertaining to the patient's diagnosis and treatment plan. Approval will be given, or denied, depending upon the physician's answers to these questions. (There have been well-documented cases of serious inconsistency in the patterns of approval and denial, including for crucial bone-marrow transplants in patients at clinically indistinguishable stages of cancer.) If dissatisfied with the judgment of the reviewer, the doctor can request a review by an actual physician, a procedure involving multiple telephone calls and much time, and issuing in a determination by an insurance-company employee whose credentials would likely not be acceptable for appointment to a major medical center.

THIS, IN a nutshell, is what is happening today now that academic medical centers, thanks to their self-induced financial collapse, are no longer the driving force in American medicine—and managed care is. When will we be able to measure the results? In the case of some of these results—the fiscal ones—the answer is, fairly soon; we can track them in the falling fraction of gross domestic product consumed by the diagnosis and care of those defined as ill. Others, however, will not become clear until some time in the future, when they can be measured by grimmer indices like age- and disease-specific mortality rates and life expectancy.

There may be no returning to the model represented by the academic medical center. But there were, and theoretically still are, solutions to the financing of medical care that can meet the problem of costs without destroying the quality of care. Such solutions would involve, among other things, the fundamental reconceiving of medical insurance, both to make it more accessible to the presently uninsured and, crucially, to reorient it in the direction of consumer choice and consumer responsibility (as through medical savings accounts). How far any fresh thinking can get in the era of managed care, though, is an open question. In the meantime, and in light of the way things are going, one is advised to make every effort to stay well.

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OBSERVATIONS

What Happened to "Scientific American"

Jeremy Bernstein

IN THE 1960's, when I began reporting on "deep" science for the *New Yorker*, William Shawn, its legendary editor, used to chide me for writing things that he thought readers might not understand. After several of these reprimands I pointed out to him that the *New Yorker*, which was then a hugely profitable operation, had a circulation of a mere 400,000, while *Scientific American*, which published *really* incomprehensible articles, and which was also hugely profitable, had (in all its multi-language editions) a circulation of well over a million.

Gerard Piel, then at *Life* magazine, had taken over *Scientific American* just after World War II, realizing that there was a core group of readers who really wanted to learn and that you could give them science "neat," without mixing it with sensationalism or with what would later be called political correctness. Advertisers also came to realize that these science "groupies"—often scientists themselves—bought things. At its peak, *Scientific American* had about 1,000 pages of advertisements a year—a very large number—and boasted that it ran more automobile ads than any other monthly magazine.

But in the mid-1980's the magazine was sold to the Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck, a giant German publishing enterprise. At about the same time, the *New Yorker* was sold to S. I. Newhouse, the owner of a giant American publishing enterprise. Both magazines had previously enjoyed a tradition of a "Chinese Wall" between the business and editorial departments, and staffs at both magazines were assured that this tradition would be maintained. Both were deceived; in the pursuit of ever larger numbers, both magazines have been radically transformed, and both are in the process of being destroyed. Ironically, although neither magazine makes its financial figures public, it is also clear that they must be doing badly: the *New Yorker* is rumored to be losing over $10 million a year. So even from the point of view of financial self-interest, whatever these publishing gurus had in mind appears to have been a mistake.

TO SEE what has happened to *Scientific American*—the *New Yorker*'s fate would require a separate article, or a book—I will perform a mini-"autopsy" on a recent issue, that of February 1997. Of course some issues are better and some are worse, but they all share the characteristics I am about to describe, and this one is wholly representative.

On the cover of the February issue you will find a frightened-looking white mouse. It appears to be escaping from the cover story, which is entitled "Animal Experimentation: The Debate Continues." I will discuss later whether what the magazine actually gives us resembles a "debate," but first let me offer an alternative explanation for the apparently catatonic state of the mouse: it has just glanced at the magazine's cover price. $4.95! It is not just that no comparable mass-circulation magazine has a cover price this high (a magazine of ideas like COMMENTARY is in another category altogether), or even that the price of *Discover*, now the clos-

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est homologue to *Scientific American*, is a full dollar lower. (The *New Yorker*, incidentally, is $2.95 on the newsstand.) Rather, *Scientific American* is charging not much less than the cost of some paperback books—and what do you get for your money?

The first 40 pages of the February issue, over a third of the whole, are a sort of catalogue of science-in-brief: bits and pieces, each only a few hundred words long, about this and that—people, business, politics—related more or less to science. This is now a common feature in the magazine, and there is nothing terribly wrong with it except that the same thing is done as well or better in many other places, including the Tuesday edition of the *New York Times*, which now has a quite good "Science" section. The *Times*, by the way, costs 60 cents.

IN RECENT years, *Scientific American* has also been running a monthly profile of a scientist. I do not know how these scientists are chosen, but it cannot be because of the earth-shattering significance of their work. The February issue gives us one Patricia D. Moehlman, who has spent some 25 years studying the jackal in Africa. (The March issue has a profile of Ronald Graham, an admittedly well-known mathematician at the AT&T Labs who juggles. He was juggling fifteen years ago when I did a very similar profile of him in connection with a series on the decline and fall of the Bell Labs after the break up of AT&T—another institutional tragedy.)

With all due respect, the fact that jackals "pair-bond" and that both partners participate in raising their pups is not something that is going to change our scientific world view. If I may mutilate a definition formulated by Niels Bohr, an uninteresting truth is one whose opposite is also an uninteresting truth.* I wish Patricia Moehlman and her jackals well, but I for one would prefer something more substantial, not to mention less patently driven by a feminist agenda. The old *Scientific American* was not without its left-leaning politics, particularly when it came to the issues of nuclear weapons and the U.S.-Soviet balance of power,† but for the most part it was a magazine you bought in order to read about science, and for the most part science is what you got to read about.

I WILL not attempt to analyze the longer articles in the February issue in great detail, but here are a few observations. An essay entitled "The Ghostliest Galaxies"—about recently discovered low-surface-brightness galaxies—begins:

> Throughout human history, people have peered into the night sky in search of clues that might help them understand the universe—its size, structure, and evolution.

This cliché of a sentence—I have picked it at random, but I could just as readily have picked dozens of others like it—illustrates one of the major problems with the present magazine: it lacks good writing. There *are* scientists who write well, but they do not seem to write for *Scientific American*. Perhaps they are put off by the Procrustean editing or by the fact that, despite its being a blatantly commercial enterprise, *Scientific American* is notorious for paying less for its articles even than some literary journals.

A bit further on we find an article entitled "The Challenge of Large Numbers." It deals with a fascinating subject but, as written, illustrates a second and more serious defect of the present magazine. The principal concern of the article, written by the computer scientist Richard C. Crandall, is how these monstrously large numbers are factored into prime numbers—1, 2, 3, 5, and so forth. He informs us that there are three powerful algorithms now used by computer scientists for this purpose. He even tells us what the acronyms of these algorithms are. What he fails to tell us is what the algorithms themselves are, or how they work! For one of them, the so-called Fast Fourier Transform—FFT—we are referred to a box. In the box we are told that "A full discussion of the FFT algorithm is beyond the scope of this article." If so, why bother? For science at this level, we do not need *Scientific American*. The *New York Times* will do just fine.

FINALLY, I turn to the "debate" over using animals in medical research. It is no debate. The two opponents of such use—Neal D. Barnard and Stephen Kaufman—note that "Animal experimenters often defend their work with brief historical accounts of the supposedly pivotal role of animal data in past advances"; such accounts, these authors warn us, are "easily skewed." Whereupon the proponents of animal experimentation—Jack H. Botting and Adrian R. Morrison—proceed to make their case by using almost nothing but historical accounts.

In a real debate, the two sides, after making their respective cases, would confront each other and we might learn something. In this sham debate, nothing further is heard from either side. Instead, a staff writer named Madhusree Mukerjee follows with a long article, "Trends in Animal Research," which totally ignores the preceding "debate" and concludes by asserting that "All of us who use modern medicine and modern consumer products need to acknowledge the debt we owe our fellow creatures and support science in its quest to do better by animals." How very nice. One wonders what

* What Bohr actually said was that a "deep truth is one whose opposite is also a deep truth." An example of such a truth, attributed I believe to J. B. Haldane, has to do with the proposition that extraterrestrial life exists. Compare *that* to the mating habits of jackals.

† See Jeffrey Marsh, "Politicizing Science," COMMENTARY, May 1984.

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happened to the white mouse on the cover.

The "back of the book" features book reviews, a section which I must say has been usefully expanded over the magazine's previous format, plus two signed opinion columns which in the February issue seem to me to be a total loss. One—by W. Brian Arthur, under the rubric *Wonders*—alerts us to how much the world has changed technologically since the birth of his grandfather. Really? The other—*Connections*, by James Burke—ends with the sentence, "Inspiration is flagging, so I'll stop." That should have been its first sentence.

In the 1950's, when I was starting my scientific career, our elders instructed us that if we ever discovered anything important we should first announce it in a rapid-publication journal like *Physical Review Letters* in order to claim priority. Then we should publish it in a more stately venue like the *Physical Review*. Then, if it was really important, we might be asked by *Scientific American* to write an article about it—a real article. Being tapped by Gerard Piel, the publisher, or by the editor, Dennis Flanagan, was like being admitted to an honor society.

But that was then. Now we have a magazine that disguises itself as *Scientific American*, just as the *New Yorker* disguises itself as the *New Yorker*. They wear some of the same clothes and hats, featuring the old typefaces and even a few of the old contributors. But in an almost desperate attempt to "sell," they have been dumbed down to the point where more and more they are becoming less and less. And to compound the folly, the strategy seems to be failing even on its own terms.

The old *Scientific American* was a magazine that one resubscribed to every year. If one was a scientist, it was part of one's professional dues. After 40 years, I see no reason to renew.

Music

The Anti-Modern Modernist

Terry Teachout

In 1965, Leopold Stokowski and the American Symphony Orchestra gave the first performance of Charles Ives's Fourth Symphony at Carnegie Hall. At the time, Ives, who had died eleven years earlier, was by no means a popular composer; but he was also far from unknown. He had won the Pulitzer Prize for music in 1947, and many of his major compositions had been recorded. But this particular performance captured the imagination of the public in a way no previous one had succeeded in doing, in part because it was the long-delayed premiere of a work completed almost 50 years earlier, and in part because of the celebrity and great age of Stokowski, who had just turned eighty-three.

For these reasons, and despite the bristling complexity of the Fourth Symphony, its premiere became a media event. Large numbers of Americans now learned for the first time the story of Ives's life—how he

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had spent his mature years working as an insurance executive, writing in his spare time vast quantities of music which went unperformed for decades because it was deemed too progressive by the musicians of his day. And they responded to the drama of this tale by seeking out his music. The Fourth Symphony, recorded by Stokowski for Columbia immediately after the first performance, quickly became a best-seller; Columbia subsequently launched a full-scale Ives recording project, and other labels rushed to follow suit.[1]

By 1968, as the composer Eric Salzman noted in an essay published that year in COMMENTARY, the Ives boom had "reached such substantial proportions that it has now become possible to speak seriously of Ives as one of the major figures of the century, and not just as a musicological curiosity."[2] It was then also possible to encounter Ives's music in the least likely of settings—I first heard it played on the *Today* show—and it no longer seemed absurd for such enthusiasts as the record executive John McClure, who produced Stokowski's rendering of the Fourth Symphony, to declare that "the four giants of 20th-century music are Stravinsky, Bartók, Schoenberg, and Ives."

Three decades later, Ives's high standing among 20th-century composers is widely taken for granted, especially in Europe. (When the German conductor Kurt Masur came to the U.S. as music director of the New York Philharmonic, Ives was the only American composer in whose music he publicly expressed interest.) He continues to be the subject of much scholarly research, and an excellent full-length biography, by the composer Jan Swafford, was published last year.[3] But he is no longer popular. Few American musicians of the first rank now perform Ives's music; new major-label recordings are all but nonexistent; and many of the old ones have gone out of print. For all intents and purposes, Charles Ives has once again become, in Eric Salzman's phrase, a musicological curiosity.

The short-lived vogue of Ives was, however, more than a curiosity: it was a highly significant event in the history of American music. That it has now come to an end is no less significant. For to follow the curve of Ives's posthumous reputation is to learn what happened to classical music in America between the end of World War II and the advent of minimalism—and why it happened.

CHARLES EDWARD IVES was born in Danbury, Connecticut, in 1874. His father was a Civil War bandmaster who later worked as a music teacher and itinerant conductor of amateur ensembles. George Ives was a populist noted for his interest in transcendentalism, the American philosophical movement identified with Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, and in musical experimentation of a kind uncommon in 19th-century America. (Years later, Charles would recall how his father "would have us sing a tune in E flat, but play the accompaniment in C.") All these traits were passed on to his eldest son, who began studying music as a child and by the age of fourteen had become a salaried church organist.

Ives attended Yale from 1894 to 1898, where he studied with Horatio Parker, a composer conservative even by the rigid standards of his time and place. For Parker, Ives composed conventional-sounding exercises in traditional harmony; in private, he continued to experiment with an increasingly radical musical language of his own.

It quickly became apparent to Ives that he would not be able to make a middle-class living through music. "If [a composer] has a nice wife and some nice children," he once wrote, "how can he let the children starve on his dissonances?" Instead, he moved to New York and went into the insurance business, where he soon distinguished himself as an innovator (he developed the modern method of estate planning, and wrote extensively on the training of insurance agents).

Ives's business success made it possible for him to devote his leisure hours to composition, and after meeting Harmony Twichell, a Connecticut nurse whom he married in 1908, he began to write the orchestral and chamber pieces which would later bring him fame, including *The Unanswered Question* and *Central Park in the Dark* (both 1906); the Second String Quartet (1907-13); the *Holidays* Symphony (1909-13) and the Fourth Symphony (1909-16); and *Three Places in New England* (1911-14)—plus the *Concord* Sonata for piano (1910-15) and dozens of art songs on texts ranging from Vachel Lindsay's "General William Booth Enters Into Heaven" to the sentimental poetry of his wife.[4]

Most of these pieces were composed in an idiosyncratic, proto-modernist style which Ives forged in near-complete unawareness of the various musical experiments then taking place in Europe. In Eric Salzman's only slightly exaggerated summary:

> Ives wrote all of modern music before anyone else got around to

[1] Stokowski's recording of the Fourth Symphony has remained in print continuously since its release, and is now available on CD (Sony MPK 46726).

[2] "Charles Ives, American," August 1968.

[3] *Charles Ives: A Life With Music*. Norton, 525 pp., $30.00.

[4] *A Set of Pieces*, an anthology of Ives's orchestral music performed by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, contains *The Unanswered Question* and *Three Places in New England* (DGG 439 869-2GH). *Central Park in the Dark* and the *Holidays* Symphony have been recorded by Michael Tilson Thomas and the Chicago Symphony (Sony MK 42381). The Emerson String Quartet has recorded the Second Quartet (DGG 435 864-2GH). Of the several recordings of the *Concord* Sonata currently available, the best is that of the Canadian pianist Marc-André Hamelin (New World NW 378-2). Ives's songs are discussed below.

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> it: free dissonance and atonality, twelve-tone, "serial" music, polytonality, quarter-tones, tone clusters, chance and improvisation, block forms and free forms, multiple meters and multiple tempi, free spatial counterpoint, open-form . . . works-in-progress, . . . collage and assemblage—in short, just about every important idea of the last 60 years and some of the most notable of the last fifteen [i.e., prior to 1968].

Yet at a time when his contemporaries were almost entirely under the sway of European Romanticism, Ives's style was also distinctively national in character. His compositions, early and late, incorporate elements of American popular music—hymn tunes and spirituals, band marches, even ragtime—sometimes "quoted" verbatim and sometimes transformed virtually beyond recognition. He wrote musical descriptions of American holidays and musical evocations of American authors (the four movements of the *Concord* Sonata are named after Emerson, Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and the Alcott family).

Above all, Ives sought to embody in music his quintessentially American philosophical and political idealism. He believed passionately in the sentiments expressed in the text he wrote for the 1915 song "Majority": "The Masses are thinking,/Whence comes the thought of the World!/The Masses are singing,/Whence comes the Art of the World!" To this end, he drafted in 1920 a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution according to which the federal government would thereafter enact laws by popular referendum; more to the point, he saw himself as a musical counterpart of Emerson, composing grandiose pieces (and conceiving still more grandiose ones, including an unfinished *Universe* Symphony) in which he attempted to create "a language so transcendent that its heights and depths will be common to all mankind."

None of this appealed to the musical establishment of turn-of-the-century America, whose members were eager to demonstrate their cosmopolitanism and their ability to speak with fluency the language of 19th-century European classical music. On the rare occasions when professional musicians deigned to read through an Ives score, they almost always dismissed it as unplayable and unintelligible.

But even though Ives was unable to get a public hearing, he continued to compose for his own pleasure and that of his wife and friends. His career was halted not by disillusion but by declining health: diabetes and a series of heart attacks caused his inspiration to dry up, and after 1918 he mainly devoted his dwindling energies to editing his existing pieces for eventual performance and publication.

At considerable personal expense, Ives published a private edition of the *Concord* Sonata in 1920, and followed it in 1922 with a volume called *114 Songs*, sending hundreds of unsolicited copies of each to a diverse assortment of musicians and other artists. While the initial reaction was mostly uncomprehending ("Some of the songs," John Philip Sousa wrote back, "are most startling to a man educated by the harmonic methods of our forefathers"), it was this step which brought him to the attention of the first generation of American modernists.

Starting in 1922, Ives's music began to receive occasional public performances, the frequency of which increased when two noted advocates of modernism, Aaron Copland and the conductor-musicologist Nicolas Slonimsky, became aware of his existence. Slonimsky organized and conducted the 1931 premiere of *Three Places in New England*; Copland played the piano accompaniment at a widely reviewed performance of six Ives songs at the Yaddo Festival in 1932, and two years later wrote a critical essay about Ives for the influential publication *Modern Music*.

In 1939, the pianist John Kirkpatrick played the premiere of the *Concord* Sonata at New York's Town Hall, and the critic Lawrence Gilman, writing in the *Herald Tribune*, called the work "the greatest music composed by an American." Thereafter, Ives was recognized as an important figure. But poor health had made him a near-hermit, and though he continued to correspond with admirers (and to subsidize discreetly the activities of various modern-music groups), he no longer went out in public.

Ives died in 1954, and was buried in the family plot in Danbury. The inscription on his tombstone, chosen by his wife, is from Psalm 108: "Awake psaltery and harp: I myself will awake right early."

At the time of Ives's death, his popularity was rooted in the belief that he was a characteristically *American* figure. This was why so many young composers were drawn to his music in the 20's and early 30's. As Aaron Copland would recall in his memoirs:

> There we were in the 20's searching for a composer from the older generation with an "American sound," and here was Charles Ives composing this incredible music—totally unknown to us!

Yet Copland's generation, while generous in its praise of Ives, was surprisingly guarded in its assessment of the actual merits of his music. As early as 1939, the composer Elliott Carter said of the *Concord* Sonata, and by implication of Ives's music in general, that "there is a lack of logic which repeated hearing can never clarify." While Carter would later modify this view, most American composers of the time seem to have felt much the same

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way. A few rejected Ives outright: Samuel Barber, for instance, called him "an amateur, a hack, who didn't put pieces together well." And even his most fervent admirers were judicious in their praise.

After World War II, the ground of Ives's reputation changed. The new avant-garde responded less to his "Americanism" than to his difficulty, his experimental aspect. This, combined with the vision of the composer as a rebellious outsider, was what principally drove the Ives revival of the 60's and 70's: his example somehow conferred legitimacy not just on an "American sound" but on American high modernism. And as was the case with Ives's earlier admirers, so his newer ones saw him not merely as a creative figure but also as a symbol, and for many of them his symbolic value was once again more powerful than his actual music.

It was thus inevitable that when the American musical establishment at last turned its back on modernism, it would also turn away from the music of Charles Ives. The rise of minimalism and the fall of Ives occurred more or less simultaneously, and for the same reason: listeners had lost interest in the hermetic complexities of high modernism, and sought simpler musical alternatives. Ives himself once shouted "God *damn* simplicity!" at the amazed pianist John Kirkpatrick. He would have understood what was happening to American music starting in the late 70's, and he would have hated it.

BUT NOW that modernism is a thing of the past, it is easier to judge Ives's music on its merits, divorced from its vanished ideological appeal. In considering that music, it is necessary first to acknowledge that he had no feel whatsoever for organic large-scale musical form. This deficiency can be heard not only in such avowedly experimental pieces as the *Concord* Sonata and Fourth Symphony, but also in the conservative works of his youth—the Second Symphony in particular—where he attempted with severely limited success to use conventional forms.[5] These early pieces, like their more complex successors, are strangely aimless: structurally, they do not "add up."

As a rule, Ives is only effective when he seeks to illustrate in music a visual or philosophical idea. (Significantly, his music has been successfully used by such choreographers as George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Paul Taylor, and Eliot Feld, all of whom have responded memorably to its visual and extramusical implications.) The idea pictured in sound—be it Central Park at night, a fireworks display on the Fourth of July, the sound of Thoreau's flute echoing over Walden Pond, or the "perennial question of existence" unforgettably portrayed in *The Unanswered Question*—provides the necessary structural imperative, thereby offsetting the lack of point-to-point coherence.

But even in these pieces, as the composer and critic Virgil Thomson has noted, Ives's music typically "comes out in sound less well than it looks on the page. . . . [T]he effect desired is easier to recall than the music itself." Here one problem is that, because his music received no professional performances at the time he was writing it, Ives lacked a sure sense of what "worked" instrumentally.

Most of his orchestral music, and many of Ives's other instrumental pieces, are overelaborate. Conductors and players are never quite done rehearsing an Ives piece; there is never a moment when it comes into complete focus. As the composer-conductor Bernard Herrmann observed:

> Ives . . . was a very impractical man when it came to performances of music. By not being a professional musician in the sense that he did not have to make a living out of music, he entered into an abstraction of music. Because it was an abstraction, it didn't deal with any of the realistic problems.

PERHAPS NOT surprisingly, it is Ives's art songs which have had the most long-lasting success with performers and audiences alike. For one thing, Ives was a gifted pianist (as can be heard in private recordings of his playing), and while the demands he makes on the accompanist are often considerable, they are rarely altogether unrealistic. In addition, the structure of an art song is dictated not solely by formal considerations but also by the sense of the words; Ives's songs, however poorly organized they may be in purely musical terms, are held together by the unfolding of their texts.

No less central to their continuing appeal is the extent to which Ives's songs are animated by his intense affection for 19th-century small-town America. Some are conventional in their musical syntax, but even the more adventurous ones rarely lose sight of their homely source material. It is in the finest of these songs—among them "The Children's Hour" (1901), "The Cage" (1906), "Autumn" (1907), "General William Booth Enters Into Heaven" (1914), "The Things Our Fathers Loved" and "Tom Sails Away" (both 1917), "Afterglow" (1919), "Walt Whitman" and "The Housatonic at Stockbridge" (both 1921)—that Ives comes closest to justifying Leonard Bernstein's effusive claim that he was "our first really great composer, our Washington, Lincoln, and Jefferson of music."[6]

That American classical music's

[5] Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic recorded the Second Symphony twice. The second performance is preferable (DGG 429 220-2GH).

[6] No completely satisfactory collection of Ives's songs has yet been recorded, but serviceable versions of 58 of them (including those mentioned above) are available in performances by the Scottish baritone Henry Herford, accompanied by Robin Bowman (Unicorn-Kanchana DKPCD9111 and DKPCD9112).

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first modernist should have been at his best in his shortest, simplest works may strike us as a paradox, but if so, it is a paradox central to Ives's entire musical enterprise. For as he made clear in his text for "The Things Our Fathers Loved," at the heart of Ives's stylistically complicated music lay an entirely uncomplicated reverence for the lost verities—the social and political but also the musical verities—of his childhood; the man who cried "God *damn* simplicity" was the same man who wrote:

I think there must be a place in the soul
All made of tunes, of tunes of long ago;
I hear the organ on the Main Street corner,
Aunt Sarah humming Gospels;
Summer evenings,
The village cornet band playing in the square. . . .
Now! Hear the songs! I know not what are the words,
But they sing in my soul of the things our Fathers loved.

If now, at the end of the 20th century, Charles Ives still exercises a claim on our attention, it is for this ability, in his best work, to bring the full force of a modernist musical intelligence to unmodern (if not, indeed, anti-modern) themes, and make them new.

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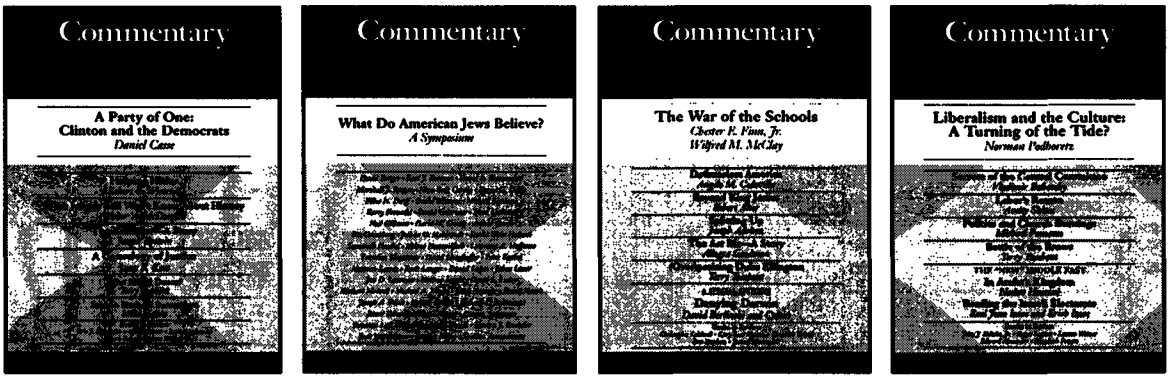

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Books in Review

Divided We Stand

We Are All Multiculturalists Now
by Nathan Glazer
Harvard University Press. 179 pp. $19.95

Reviewed by
Linda Chavez

A DEBATE over multiculturalism has been raging in the United States for much of the last decade. Proponents of the doctrine favor the notion that no single, common culture unites all Americans. They argue as well that whites, especially white males, of European ancestry must give up cultural, economic, and political dominance, and they are anxious that the surrender commence immediately, even before whites lose majority status—which the Bureau of the Census projects will happen some time shortly after the year 2050. Multiculturalists back racial preferences in employment, education, and government spending, and have been behind a wholesale revision of the curriculum at all levels to reflect their views.

There has, of course, been resistance to this agenda. A number of people in the political and intellectual worlds, including, prominently, contributors to this magazine, have warned against the movement's potential to tear the nation apart. But they are bucking the tide. From corporate executives embracing "diversity" to small-town educators, a broad variety of Americans, acting out of an equally broad variety of motives, have jumped on the multicultural bandwagon, and the ideology and policies that flow from the multiculturalist movement are becoming entrenched in American life.

In *We Are All Multiculturalists Now*, the sociologist Nathan Glazer declares the debate over. In a tone at once rueful and sympathetic, he proclaims the triumph of multiculturalism and attempts to explain what it means and how it came to pass.

In some ways, Glazer picks up the story where his earlier, highly influential 1963 book, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (co-authored with Daniel P. Moynihan), left off. In that work, the authors argued that contrary to the early theories of assimilation, the Jews, Irish, and Italians of New York City never entirely shed their sense of ethnic identity, and that the assimilatory model was even less relevant in the case of New York's Puerto Ricans and blacks. In *We Are All Multiculturalists Now*, Glazer's attention has shifted away from the ethnic white urban core—which in retrospect, he acknowledges, *has* by and large assimilated—to focus primarily on America's blacks, whom he sees as remaining far outside the social and cultural mainstream.

A good deal of the book is devoted to a recounting of our failure to incorporate blacks into the broader society, a failure which Glazer claims is still conspicuous in housing patterns, employment, and education. The rest concerns the rise of multiculturalism—in Glazer's view, a prime consequence of that failure and "the price America is

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paying for its inability or unwillingness to incorporate into its society African-Americans, in the same way and to the same degree it has incorporated so many groups." True, proponents of multiculturalism also speak in the name of groups other than blacks—women, Hispanics, Asians, lesbians, and gays—but blacks, in Glazer's locution, are the "storm troops" of the movement, and "we would not be seeing the present uproar" were it not for the frustration "over widespread educational failure among their youth, which leads them to cast about for alternatives, new departures, new approaches, anything that might help."

THE MAIN such "new approach" has been, as I noted at the outset, to throw over the notion of a common culture, and the main venue for this new approach has been the schools. For, as Glazer says, it is the schools that have traditionally served to assimilate children of different backgrounds into the American ethos. Now, under the multiculturalist dispensation, many of them are beginning to instill the contrary belief that America is nothing more than an agglomeration of various peoples, that one's particular racial or ethnic identity is of paramount value, and that *e pluribus unum* is a falsehood.

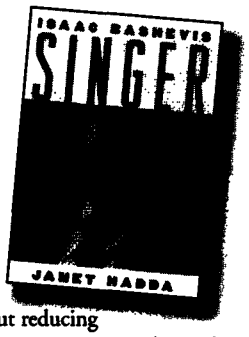
The struggle over multiculturalist textbooks and curricula has been intense in school district after school district. Glazer recounts here his own role in the development of one such curriculum for New York State that still remains unfinished after a decade of toil.

The endeavor was fraught with problems from the start. The original committee appointed to oversee the project had seventeen members (including Leonard Jeffries of City College's African-American studies department, well-known for his racist and anti-Semitic views) but only one white. Its 1989 report blasted New York's school system

Isaac Bashevis Singer

A Life

JANET HADDA



"The iridescent charm of Isaac Bashevis Singer is such to give the slip to the very letters of the alphabet, but Janet Hadda has out-tricked the Yiddish trickster in this brief but wonderfully alive-and-kicking biography. The story she tells will entertain, appall, and fascinate both those who have yet to discover Singer and those who think they already know him"—Jack Miles, author of *God: A Biography.* "Hadda writes from a psychological perspective, which illuminates aspects of Singer's art and life without reducing it to simple causes.... Throughout, Hadda effectively explores Singer's complex and divided personality and the sociological elements in his art"—*Library Journal.*

$27.50, 243 pp.

Struggles in the Promised Land

Towards a History of Black-Jewish Relations in the United States

Edited by JACK SALZMAN and CORNEL WEST

Jack Salzman and Cornel West have edited a collection of essays that provide a wide ranging account of the history of Black-Jewish relations right to the present. The contributors—who include Patricia Williams, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Michael Walzer, and Cornel West—offer reasoned discussions of such divisive issues as Zionism, affirmative action, and Blacks and Jews in the American Left. This is an important examination of African-American/Jewish relations throughout history.

$35.00, 448 pp.

Why History Matters

Life and Thought

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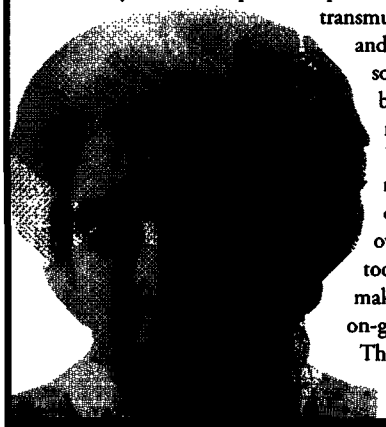
"This book is a gift to all who hope to understand the role of the past in the present.... With her customary brilliance and clarity, Gerda Lerner offers us her own story and in the process explains how history happens, is interpreted, utilized, transmuted into meaning and memory, and denied and distorted by those with the power to do so"—Letty Cottin Pogrebin. "Gerda Lerner brings us to the moral Grand Divides of history, then quietly explains where she sees humankind having been, and where, with rational unity, we might yet go. I was fascinated reading Professor Lerner's account of her own disciplined struggle not to hate Germans today for the genocide of European Jewry. She makes it very clear the process is important and on-going"—Alan Adelson, Executive Director, The Jewish Heritage Project.



$30.00, 288 pp.

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for the "intellectual and educational oppression" of African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Asians, and it recommended the formation of separate curricula for each ethnic group (including "European Americans," whom it lumped together as a single people).

The firestorm this brought about led to the appointment of a second, more balanced committee charged with drawing up a new report. In addition to Glazer, it included the historians Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and Kenneth Jackson. But this committee too was plagued by strife; as Glazer tells it, his own modest proposal that the report make reference to America's "devotion to democratic values and procedures" and a "fund of values from our past" drew a rebuff from a Hispanic scholar who charged that this amounted to the "xenophobic language of the nativists and the Americanization movement . . . the worst moments of U.S. chauvinism."

Despite this contretemps, the committee eventually succeeded in issuing a new draft which, though more balanced than the first, was accompanied by strong dissents from both Schlesinger and Jackson. Glazer, however, who acknowledges here that the report "was not distinguished," signed it, without adding a word of criticism.

AS THIS episode confirms, Nathan Glazer is deeply ambivalent about his subject. On the one hand, the critics of multiculturalism "have much wisdom on their side" and he hopes to convey his "own sense of regret that we have had to come to this." On the other hand, he is "impressed [by] . . . the strength of multiculturalism, the apparent inevitability of multiculturalism," and he is concerned not only to understand the arguments of its proponents but to put the best face on them.

How did a scholar known as an early and perceptive critic of racial preferences—see his 1975 book, *Affirmative Discrimination*, and his many articles in COMMENTARY—arrive at this pass? Glazer himself explains the shift in his thinking by invoking his "optimism" of two decades ago, an optimism he now believes was unwarranted. As he writes, he thought then that "the last barriers to difference in treatment based on race, religion, nationality were being swept aside," and that "African-Americans would become, in their ways of life, their degree of success, their connection to society, simply Americans of darker skin." Today, however, when "serious backsliding" is under way, along with "a hard institutionalization of differences," we can no longer sustain that faith. Hence, supposedly, the need for compensatory programs like multiculturalism, which is both an expression of these differences and, ideally, in his judgment a means of overcoming them.

Several questions arise from all this. In the first place, Glazer's pessimism about the situation of blacks today seems seriously overdrawn. Glazer acknowledges that "by some measures there has been continuous improvement in the condition of American blacks," but he goes on to say that the 1970's marked a "turning point" in which various indicators of progress "slowed down or stopped," and have not since improved. But this is hardly true of black attainment in education, one of the areas cited by Glazer. In 1970, only 31 percent of blacks had completed four years of high school as compared with 54 percent of whites. By 1995, the comparable figures were 74 percent of blacks and 83 percent of whites.

Be that as it may, Glazer is particularly troubled by the divisions still evident today in both the housing market and in rates of intermarriage, where one finds "a unique degree of separation" between blacks and whites. Yet his picture of residential segregation—"the situation," he writes, "can only be described as extremely depressing"—relies largely, and uncritically, on the work of the sociologists Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton (*American Apartheid*, 1993), work which has been questioned and is now thoroughly refuted in a forthcoming book by Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom, *America in Black and White*.

As for intermarriage, Glazer cites 1980 census data showing an exogamy rate among black women of only 1.3 percent. That number is indeed low; but by 1993 it had tripled, by no means a trivial increase. Moreover, the rate for black males is significantly higher: in 1990 nearly 10 percent of black men who married (and not just those living outside the South, as Glazer contends) took white brides. While intermarriage is still substantially more uncommon among blacks than among other groups, the rates are steadily moving up.

BUT EVEN if Glazer were right about the extent to which blacks are excluded from American society, it is difficult to understand how multiculturalism is helping matters, especially when a better case could be made that it is hindering them. Although Glazer is critical of the worst excesses of the movement, he is almost naively generous in assessing the motives of its proponents:

> [T]he basic demand of the multiculturalists is for inclusion, not separation, and inclusion under the same rules stretching back to the Constitution that have permitted the steady broadening of what we understand as equality.

In fact, and in practice, multiculturalism has nothing to do with inclusion. It has led universities to set up separate dormitories for black students and other minority groups; it has led school districts in major cities to establish separate schools for black students where racist nostrums and nonsensical theories are

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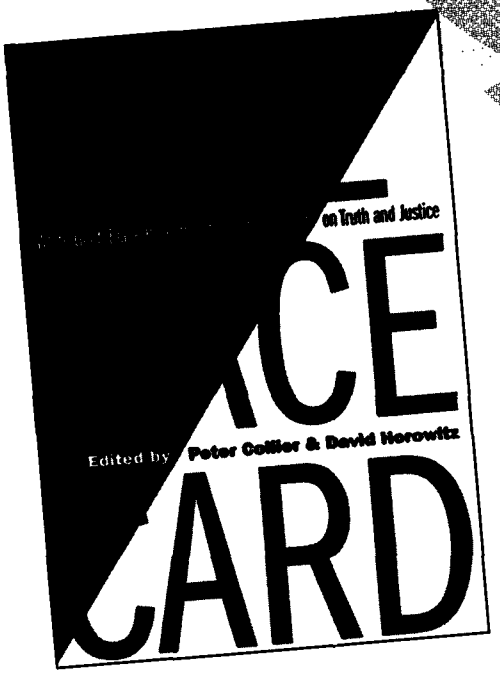

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being taught; and by extending the polarizing logic of affirmative action into every nook and cranny of our culture, our historical self-understanding, and our sense of national identity, it has further poisoned the climate of race relations in American society at large.

How will any of this help to raise the academic scores of black children, or make it more likely for them to get good jobs, or bring blacks into the American mainstream? Offering no answers to such questions, Glazer, who seems to have despaired of the possibility of black progress, has chosen instead to bow to the "inevitable." It is a good thing for him, and for the rest of us, that we are *not* all multiculturalists now. At least, not yet.

Grand Alliance

The Dawn of Peace in Europe
by Michael Mandelbaum
Twentieth Century Fund. 207 pp. $19.95

Reviewed by
Alvin H. Bernstein

THIS JULY, President Clinton and fifteen other heads of state will meet in Madrid to offer NATO membership to Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. The legislatures of the NATO countries will then be asked to ratify the new treaty. At stake for Americans is a decision that will shape our defense policy in the century to come and affect the lives of millions of people inhabiting a huge geographical tract with a dense network of commercial, political, and cultural ties to the United States.

Although Clinton's decision to move forward with NATO expansion enjoys a good deal of support both within the Beltway and outside it, a formidable array of foreign-policy experts is organizing to persuade legislators here and abroad to vote "nay." Michael Mandelbaum, the director of the Project on East-West Relations at the Council on Foreign Relations, is of their number. His *The Dawn of Peace in Europe* is a brief against NATO expansion, drawn as exhaustively and cogently as such a brief can be drawn.

Mandelbaum, it must be made clear at the outset, is no isolationist. He is committed to the maintenance of European stability and sees NATO in its current form as the best way to go about preserving it. Among other things, he views the alliance as a hedge against a resurgent Russia, and as a means of sparing the Germans from having to fend for themselves, either by going nuclear or by going soft if their neighbor to the East once again makes itself heard. He would undoubtedly agree, as the aphorism of Lord Ismay has it and as most Western diplomats find it impolitic to say, that NATO's purpose is "to keep the Americans in, the Russians out, and the Germans down."

MANDELBAUM OFFERS an assortment of arguments against expansion. For one thing, he believes it will inevitably fray the existing alliance. Whereas, during the cold war, the NATO partners were all agreed on the threat from Moscow—and, unofficially, find it worrying still—today they are not likely to agree on much of anything else. The bickering that occurred over intervention in "out-of-area" Bosnia has already revealed the potential for serious fissures within the ranks. Adding more allies, like adding more missions, would ultimately shatter all consensus.

A second worry is that American policy is being driven by political rather than strategic considerations. Here, Mandelbaum accuses President Clinton of having used the prospect of NATO enlargement as a way to appeal to voters with ethnic ties to Eastern Europe, many of whom are clustered in crucial electoral states. How else, he asks, can we explain a policy under which those who most need NATO's protection from Russia—Ukraine, the Baltic republics, and Belarus—will not get it, while those who are about to be offered protection need it least?

Not only are the administration's motives crass, Mandelbaum argues, but its objectives are confused. If the aim of NATO enlargement is to support the development of democracy and the free market, then the U.S. has targeted the wrong countries and selected the wrong organization. The European Union (EU), not NATO, is the body that can help the Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians cope with lingering poverty and unemployment. What is more, Russia and Ukraine need far more help crawling out of their economic morass than do their neighbors to the west. Similarly, if the aim of American policy is to deter ethnic conflict, the administration has yet again missed the mark. By Central European standards, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary are more ethnically homogeneous than not, and have been handling their difficulties on their own; the real trouble spots on the map are to their south and east.

COMPELLING AS he believes these arguments to be, the linchpin of Mandelbaum's case centers on Moscow's displeasure with NATO expansion and the possibly grave consequences of that displeasure. When the Soviet Union agreed to the reunification of Germany in 1990, Mandelbaum reminds us, Western foreign ministers pledged not to extend the NATO alliance eastward, and not to admit former

ALVIN H. BERNSTEIN *was the founding director of the George C. Marshall European Security Studies Center and is now a research professor at the National Defense University.*

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Warsaw-pact countries as members. Russians therefore view NATO expansion not only as a threat but as a breach of faith, and if it goes forward they might well express their resentment in various unpleasant ways, perhaps turning permanently against the entire post-cold-war settlement in Europe.

Why run such a risk, asks Mandelbaum, when Europe as a whole, thanks to arms-control agreements ranging from the INF treaty to START II, already enjoys as fine a security blanket as diplomacy can buy? Cumulatively, those pacts provide a "common security order" that leaves the armies of Europe capable of defending their national territories but not of attacking anyone else. This order depends on the continued participation of Russia; if Russia opts out, on account of NATO expansion, all the tremendous gains from the end of the cold war will be lost.

This is certainly an impressive set of arguments, and in putting them forth Mandelbaum has shown, as in his previous writings on foreign affairs, that he possesses a formidable intellect and is capable of writing pellucid prose. But *The Dawn of Peace in Europe* would have been even more impressive (if somewhat less persuasive) had Mandelbaum also chosen to present, and refute, the arguments of the opposing side. As it stands, his book often has the feel of a lawyer's summation, in which his own predilection for maintaining the European status quo is never subjected to critical examination.

Indeed, the case *for* NATO expansion begins precisely with the observation that the status quo in Europe is not sustainable. Though one would hardly know it from the abstract considerations that fill Mandelbaum's brief, a great tide of democratic aspiration is now running through Central and Eastern Europe. In the eyes of the people who have lived in the no-man's-land between Russia and Germany, democracy is the means for regaining admission to the European club from which the Soviet Union banned them for so long. NATO, not the EU, is the symbol of club membership, not merely for reasons of prestige but because it alone can guarantee the sovereign independence these countries have so recently recaptured. They would undoubtedly regard a refusal to admit them as a betrayal of their hopes and even of their just deserts.

Mandelbaum objects that we are offering security to those who need it least, while excluding the most troubled and endangered. This is like contending that our finest universities should admit the most backward students first; it is one of

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the few arguments in an excellent book that deserve to be labeled unserious. Although Mandelbaum is right to point to the various trouble spots on the East European landscape where urgent help is required, the proper question is, are these spots more likely to spread if NATO turns its back, or to recede? In fact, the prospect of *eventual* NATO membership might serve as a powerful inducement to these countries to embark upon reform, particularly of their national-security structures. Thus, Slovakia, for example, with its highly undemocratic head of state, is far from ready to be considered a serious candidate for membership. (Even Poland, in my view, should not be admitted until its military agrees to accept civilian control.)

AS FOR Russia's allergic reaction to NATO expansion, which constitutes the foundation of Mandelbaum's case, this of course is hardly to be taken lightly, but there is reason to believe that things are not as dire as he suggests. For one thing, public opinion in Russia is not exactly preoccupied with the NATO question; Russians have many more significant things on their minds these days. A public-opinion survey taken in December shows that to the extent Russians *are* interested and informed, they are also ambivalent: a third of those queried said that Russia should try to hinder the move; another third said, remarkably, that Russia should either become a member of NATO or in some other way affiliate with the Atlantic Alliance; and a third found the question "difficult to answer." Elite opinion is fractured too. Alexander Lebed, the nationalist retired general and Yeltsin rival, has scoffed at Kremlin warnings against NATO enlargement as stock propaganda from the Soviet era, and more than a few prominent figures in public life have made similar remarks.

Though Boris Yeltsin, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, and other officials continue to issue warnings, they may now be attempting to cut the best possible deal on what they know is inevitable. Under these circumstances, the trick for the United States is to thread the diplomatic needle so that Russia accepts the outcome with minimum disruption and without a compensatory bargain so generous to Moscow as to seem a sellout of the Central Europeans. The outcome of Yeltsin's recent summit meeting with Clinton in Helsinki shows that NATO expansion, contrary to what Mandelbaum says, is not an obstacle to economic or even strategic cooperation with the Russians.

CHOICES IN international relations are rarely unaccompanied by risk, and the present moment is no exception. By far the most inviting course for the United States is to continue a policy of encouraging former Communist states in Europe to develop democratic institutions. This is the best means for bringing peace and freedom to a continent that has known a century of barbarous domination and terrifying war. We cannot do this if we remove an essential *sine qua non* of democracy: namely, security. Nor can we allow Russia, which will inevitably be one of the slowest to settle into a democratic framework, to set the pace.

This is why Mandelbaum's confidence that the Atlantic Alliance can continue in its present form is misplaced. No action would be more likely to shake Germany, break apart the Alliance, and convince those who look to the West for help that they are not going to receive it than an abandonment of our stated policy on NATO expansion. If we did reverse course, we would almost certainly launch ourselves, sooner rather than later, into the very isolationism that Mandelbaum for the best of reasons wants to avoid.

Mime and Man

Charlie Chaplin
and His Times
by Kenneth S. Lynn
Simon & Schuster. 604 pp. $35.00

Tramp
by Joyce Milton
HarperCollins. 578 pp. $32.00

Reviewed by
Daniel J. Silver

OF ALL the great actors from the golden age of silent-screen comedy, only Charlie Chaplin has retained some of the iconic status he enjoyed in his heyday, when he was the object of worldwide adulation on a scale that would not be seen again until Elvis Presley and the Beatles. True, his reputation gradually wore away in the 1940's through a combination of scandals both personal and political—aside from his romantic follies, he became increasingly strident in expressing his Communist sympathies just as America was entering the cold war—and he left the United States in disgrace in 1952. But through calculated efforts of rehabilitation which included a best-selling work of selective memory, *My Autobiography* (1964), Chaplin succeeded in making a triumphant comeback. Not long before his death he was feted by the show-business elite in New York and Los Angeles and once again crowned the king of comedy and a supreme artist of the age. With the publication of *Chaplin: His Life and Art* (1985) by the English early-cinema expert David Robinson, and the release of Richard Attenborough's celebratory film, *Chaplin* (1992), the genteel memorialization of Chaplin reached an apex.

Now, however, in the age of deconstruction and "dysfunctional-

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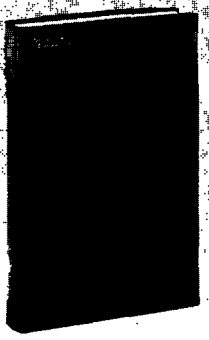

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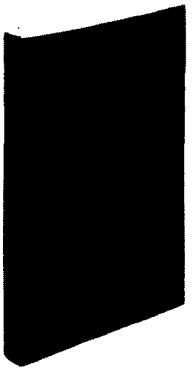

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ism," Chaplin's reputation is once again being tested. His two latest biographers have flung open the archives to reveal often foul-smelling deeds and personal sickness. Inured though we all have become to the "dark side" of artistic temperament, it cannot but be disconcerting to devotees of the Little Tramp to learn that the man who created this revered image was the same man who coerced at least two of his impossibly young paramours into aborting his children; who, incredibly rich yet a hard-core skinflint, left his long-time collaborators with next to nothing for their years of catering to his every black mood and wild caprice; who, enjoying the love of millions of Americans, felt absolutely no loyalty to this country and had nothing but contempt for his public; and who, having portrayed endless affection for little Jackie Coogan in *The Kid* (1921), would prove a harsh and distant taskmaster with his own children when he at last found it convenient to have them.

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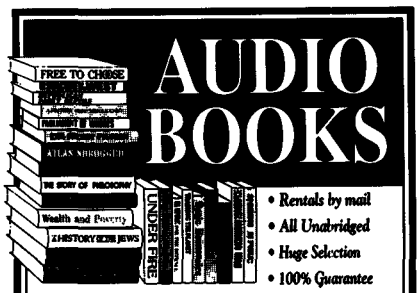

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CHARLES SPENCER CHAPLIN was born in 1889 in London. He was given the name of his mother's husband, although it is not clear that Charles Senior (who eventually succumbed to drink) was in fact his father—an ambiguity that would haunt him for the rest of his life. His mother was a sometime music-hall performer who (according to Kenneth Lynn) may have spent a good deal of her time walking the streets. She also showed incipient signs of mental illness—Joyce Milton's diagnosis is manic-depressive disorder while Lynn finds schizophrenia—and by the time Charlie and his older brother Sydney were of school age she was undergoing a series of nervous collapses that landed her in asylums and effectively orphaned them for much of their early lives.

A legend which Chaplin loved to retell is that he first appeared on stage as a replacement for his mother and quickly won over the crowd. This is probably apocryphal, but by his early teens Chaplin had indeed taken to the boards as a Cockney street urchin in a popular adaptation of Sherlock Holmes; he got good notices, and was hooked. He found his true métier, however, not in legitimate theater but in the music halls, achieving some small fame as a principal in Fred Karno's Komedians. There he first tried out the mimicry that was to become the hallmark of his comic career.

On his second American tour with Karno, Chaplin made enough of a mark to catch the attention of the entrepreneurs who were bankrolling Mack Sennett, of Keystone Kops fame. Taking a chance, Chaplin gave up live performance for the movies, shrewdly anticipating the prospects of the new medium. His intelligence and deliberateness—as well as the beginnings of megalomania—were evident very early on.

BY THE time Chaplin joined Sennett's studio in 1914 he already had his own ideas about how to do comedy. He waged a campaign with Sennett to slow things down and showcase character rather than just action, and at some point began to put together what became his signature characterization of the Little Tramp. It was a look fashioned from the incongruities of mock-gentility: beginning on top with the faux-genteel derby, then the toothbrush mustache and the rich man's affectation of a walking cane which was to become both crutch and weapon. To these touches were added the shoulder-pinching coat about two sizes too small and pants as baggy as pantaloons (said to be borrowed from his Sennett colleague, Fatty Arbuckle). The look was completed by size-fourteen shoes, jutting out ridiculously from Chaplin's in-fact dainty feet. The famous waddle went with the shoes, but it was hard to say which was cause and which effect.

Lynn's rich account of the electrifying effect of the Chaplin persona on popular taste shows that the "merchandising" of an image is hardly a new phenomenon. With Chaplin's success came new leverage, which he parlayed into increasingly lucrative contracts, first with Essanay Studios and most memorably with Mutual, with whom he signed in 1916. There,

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over a two-year period, he made twelve two-reelers—among them *Easy Street*, *The Vagabond*, *The Immigrant*, and *The Rink*—which would have immortalized him had he done nothing else in his life.

Chaplin's ambitions also increased with success. He began to take ever more time making his movies—the result partly of perfectionism, but also of increasing self-consciousness: he was no longer just a comic but an artist. This did not sit well, however, with the production-line mentality of the commercial interests who paid him, and by the late teens he was already involved in multiple lawsuits, a condition that would dog him practically to the end of his life.

As it grew increasingly difficult for Chaplin to complete assignments, it also became clear that he would eventually have to go it alone. By the beginning of the 1920's he had formed his own studio, with his films to be distributed through United Artists (a firm he had started in 1918 with Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford). Thus began the period of his best-remembered feature films: *The Gold Rush* (1925), *The Circus* (1928), *City Lights* (1931), *Modern Times* (1936), and his anti-Hitler "spoof," *The Great Dictator* (1940).

In this same period, though, the dilatoriness of Chaplin's working methods began to take its toll. He found himself floundering, searching for comic invention to cover the length of the feature format: for *The Gold Rush* alone, he shot over 200,000 feet for a final product of some 8,000 feet. The fact is that Chaplin lacked a strong narrative sense. Unlike his contemporary, Buster Keaton, he never learned to integrate his antic scenes with a full-blown story, and his features, as some of his critics have rightly noted, were little more than collections of set-pieces. But what unmatched set-pieces they were.

Throughout this time, too, Chaplin was fighting off the inevitable transition to sound, afraid, correctly, that he would not be able to sustain his success with the public outside his accustomed mute persona. Though he had come to appreciate the value of sound—and was to contribute memorably to the musical scores of his feature films—he did not dare to employ non-musical sound effects until *Modern Times*, and did not attempt synchronized speech until *The Great Dictator*. (The latter, reasonably successful at the box office, includes a final speech by a Jewish barber arguing for peace at any price—a message wholly consistent with Moscow's line of the moment.)

But Chaplin's premature artistic senescence could not be attributed wholly to the difficulties of making the transition to sound. It stemmed as well from the distractions of an increasingly complicated and tawdry private life. While the diminutive Casanova seemed to have a compulsion to bed every attractive woman he met, it was only very young women who brought out his real passion. Chaplin's amorous adventures left in their wake a trail of destruction: several abortions, a suicide (of the mistress he shared with the intellectual Max Eastman), several suicide attempts, and wasted lives.

Meanwhile, he was also casting aside his insecurity about his ignorance of world affairs and giving voice to his political sympathy for socialism and in particular for the workers' paradise of the Soviet Union. His biographers, unfortunately, are unable to clarify whether his leftist politics owed more to his alleged memories of early poverty in England or to his desire to flatter, and be flattered by, the left-wing intellectuals who hovered in and around Hollywood. In either

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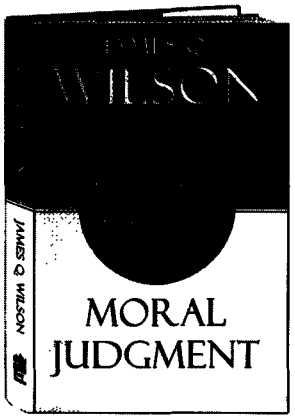

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case, Chaplin's pro-Soviet enthusiasm exceeded that even of the typical fellow-traveler in those years of the Popular Front.

After the end of World War II, Chaplin's views became harder to ignore. His 1947 "comedy," *Monsieur Verdoux*, contains a speech by the main character, a French bluebeard played by Chaplin himself, minimizing his own acts of willful murder by likening them to the behavior of soldiers under arms at the bidding of their capitalist masters. This outraged critics and public alike. The film was a disastrous flop, and an embittered Chaplin would forever complain of his rejection by an ungrateful and crass America. He made one more film here, the bittersweet and autobiographical *Limelight*, and then, his tax problems mounting, he took off with his last child-bride, Oona O'Neill (daughter of Eugene), for Switzerland, where he would remain until his death in 1977.

AN ASSIDUOUS researcher, Joyce Milton provides, in *Tramp*, a valuable and impressively complete compendium of facts. Milton, who is the co-author (with the historian Ronald Radosh) of an earlier book on Ethel and Julius Rosenberg (*The Rosenberg File*, 1983), deftly negotiates the twists and turns of Chaplin's leftist associations and legal tangles. Unfortunately, though, her narrative is by turns leaden and breathless, and hardly makes for compelling reading. Nor, more damagingly, does she attempt an overall perspective on Chaplin; taking his genius on faith, she provides no account of how man and art might be related.

By contrast, Kenneth Lynn's biography is the best and most readable to date, displaying all his customary elegance and sparkle. As his title implies, Lynn is not content to describe Chaplin's life and work but also ventures into the social "surround" in which the work was received, in the process offering distinctive capsule histories of the movies and other popular arts. Though Lynn clearly admires Chaplin's talent, and takes delight in the movies, his judgments of the man are unflinchingly harsh.

As one might expect from the author of *Hemingway* (1987), in which the famous he-man of American letters was revealed to be a closet androgyne, Lynn freely indulges here in psychological speculation. According to Lynn, it was Chaplin's childhood loneliness in dealing with a mentally disturbed mother, the anguish he suffered at her "betrayal," and his powerlessness in the face of her frightening need that contributed in later life to his rage for control. This was manifest not only in his insistence on overseeing the entire process of producing and directing his movies but also in his choice of pliable young women as sexual partners and in his Svengali-like attempts to dominate them and restructure their lives. While Lynn at times reaches further than the evidence justifies, he has a way of making his analysis seem plausible.

What remains in question, however, is the degree to which knowledge of Chaplin's emotional entanglements and their possible sources can help explain his art or his genius. Here it must be said that biography proves an elusive guide. Though it may sharpen our alertness, for example, to the elements of sadism and brutality in many of his films, can an artist whose work once seemed more universal than that of any other figure in this century really be best understood through an appreciation of his personal peculiarities? I think not. On fresh appraisal, the films offer as much sheer magic and as much sheer joy as they ever did—a thought that might be disturbing to some, but, in an age in which universal claims of any kind have been under assault from every direction, is also oddly comforting.

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Home Sweet Home

The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms With America's Changing Families
by Stephanie Coontz
Basic. 238 pp. $23.00

The Assault on Parenthood: How Our Culture Undermines the Family
by Dana Mack
Simon & Schuster. 368 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Elizabeth Kristol

Five years ago, academics and analysts specializing in family policy found their careers jumpstarted by a most unlikely event: a comment by the Vice President of the United States about a television sitcom. When Dan Quayle attacked TV for glamorizing Murphy Brown's decision to have a baby out of wedlock, a dam broke, unleashing a passionate debate. Suddenly "family experts" were being called on to give their views to newspapers, speak on radio talk shows, even appear on *Oprah*.

Stephanie Coontz, a professor of history at Evergreen State College, and Dana Mack, an affiliate scholar at the Institute for American Values, are two of the experts who have been weighing in. That they approach the issue from opposite sides of the political spectrum is obvious from a glance at the subtitles of their new books: Coontz urges us to come "to terms with America's changing families," while Mack laments "how the culture undermines the family." Even Coontz's use of the inclusive *families* stands in contrast to Mack's resolute reference to *the family*.

In an earlier book, *The Way We Never Were* (1992), Coontz sought to debunk the notion that there was ever a "golden age of family life." Now, in *The Way We Really Are*, she examines what brought the nuclear family, so predominant in the 1950's, to its current pass.

Coontz's argument rests on the premise that the nuclear family was, in essence, nothing but the chance product of postwar social and economic conditions, including generous federal programs that made it possible for young couples to purchase homes and for women to stay home with their children. Moreover, just as material factors underpinned "the 1950's family experiment," changing material conditions "brought [that experiment] to an end." It is economic reality, and not "willful abandonment of responsibility and commitment," that accounts for the new face of American families.

Coontz applies her avowedly value-neutral and economistic approach to a whole range of human behaviors. Thus, she interprets the rise in unwed births as the result not of the sexual revolution, but of changing "economic relations" between men and women:

> Men with low or irregular wages are far less likely to marry a woman they impregnate than men who have a steady job and earn a family wage. Women are less likely to see such men as desirable marriage partners.

In a similar vein, Coontz rejects the popular belief that children today are more violent than they used to be. She assures us that older generations of men recall "almost daily fights behind the high school or the local movie theater." The only difference, she says, is the availability of high-caliber automatic and semiautomatic weapons, which "means the fights that *do* occur are more likely to turn lethal."

In short, Coontz tries hard to convince us that we are not living through a moral revolution but only undergoing an inevitable process of

Elizabeth Kristol *writes frequently on feminism and other social issues.*

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social change. Once we grasp this fact, she believes, we will also understand that such developments as widespread cohabitation, divorce, out-of-wedlock births, and institutionalized day care are here to stay. For Coontz, the realistic response is to accept these developments and to adapt to them.

YET COONTZ's economic determinism is unconvincing. Without the sexual revolution, for example, would so many "men with low or irregular wages" have been "impregnating" women who regarded them as less than "desirable marriage partners"? And are we really to believe that it does not require an entirely different moral complexion to fire an automatic weapon at a classmate than to punch him in the nose?

A larger objection might be raised as well. Even if we were to accept Coontz's argument that the nuclear family was a historical anomaly, that would hardly disqualify it as an ideal. Her insistence that we adapt to social change simply begs the question: how do we know when adaptation is for the better or for the worse?

In fact, Coontz's eagerness to accommodate to life in the 1990's suggests that she herself is in the end less an economic determinist than a particular kind of moralist. She approves of many of our current sexual and family arrangements, and it is unsurprising therefore that she is content to pose all our problems as surmountable. Were she living in an era she detested—say, the 1950's—it is unthinkable that she would be complacently urging us, as she does here, "to stop arguing about the relative merits of ideal family types and have a serious discussion about how to build the support systems that modern families need."

As for the particular family support systems Coontz has in mind, they include the usual roster: government job-creation, job-training, and income-support programs to help single parents make a decent living; government-mandated flextime, day care, and paid parental leave. Coontz acknowledges that these and other reforms will be costly, but the issue, she asserts revealingly, is not "whether we have the money to help America's families, but whether we have the values to do so."

SO THE question is one of values after all. On that, Dana Mack would surely agree. Her own values, however, are rather different from Stephanie Coontz's, and so is her moral vision. Where Coontz maintains that our current social ills are primarily the result of changing economic forces, Mack insists that they stem directly from the demise of the two-parent family and public scorn for family values. Where Coontz rejects the language of crisis, Mack sees crisis all around her: in the streets, in the schools, in the courts, even in the home. And where Coontz thinks that children can thrive in a wide variety of family (and not-so-family) settings, Mack insists that the nuclear family is uniquely able to meet their needs.

Today's families, Mack asserts, "are under insurmountable pressures from a culture that undermines child-rearing efforts." Even the most responsible, caring parents feel powerless to protect their children from a host of outside influences that mock their beliefs. The very institutions parents used to rely on to support their efforts now seem bent on thwarting them. And economic pressures just make matters worse: when parents must put in longer and longer hours trying to make ends meet, they have even less time to spend with their children.

What about all the various programs purportedly designed to assist parents? Mack says they are the family's worst enemies. She describes how, over the past century, child-rearing experts have increasingly questioned the instincts and authority of parents, a trend that has culminated in notions of "toxic" parenting and portrayals of the traditional family as a pathological institution.

According to Mack, the anti-parent bias of child-welfare agencies has resulted in an explosion of false or exaggerated claims of child abuse. The same fervor distorts guardianship issues, foster-care placements, and adoption policies. But nowhere, says Mack, are parents treated with more flagrant contempt than in the schools. Passing academic fads—whole-language reading, new math, outcome-based education—are insinuated into the curriculum without parental approval, and often in spite of it. Likewise, sex-education and "life-skills" programs actively encourage children to question their parents' values and beliefs.

What is a parent to do? Mack de-

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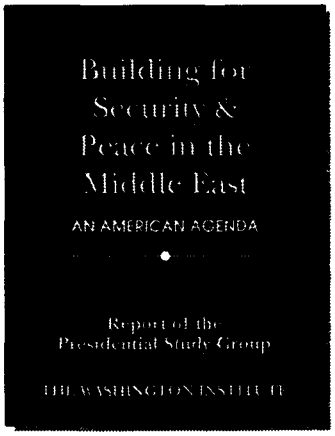
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scribes the many ways, both large and small, in which some parents have begun to rebel against what they perceive to be a hostile culture. This grass-roots movement, known as the "new familism," includes women who are leaving the workforce or switching to part-time jobs in order to spend more time with their children, and men who deliberately stagger their work schedules to provide "tag-team" care at home. It is marked by such simple gestures as putting away the television set or sitting down each night for a family meal. And its most obvious manifestation is the abandonment of the public schools in favor of traditional parochial schools, new denominational (primarily Christian) schools, alternative charter schools, and, most dramatically, homeschooling.

Mack clearly sympathizes with the new familists, but she is also surprisingly critical of them. In particular, she is dismayed by their isolationism and their political apathy. "The grass-roots pro-family movement," she writes,

> has been dedicated more to countercultural retreat than to political activism. . . . It is a strategy of sandbagging, of disappearing—behind suburban hedges, or urban apartment doors—to draw up game plans for survival.

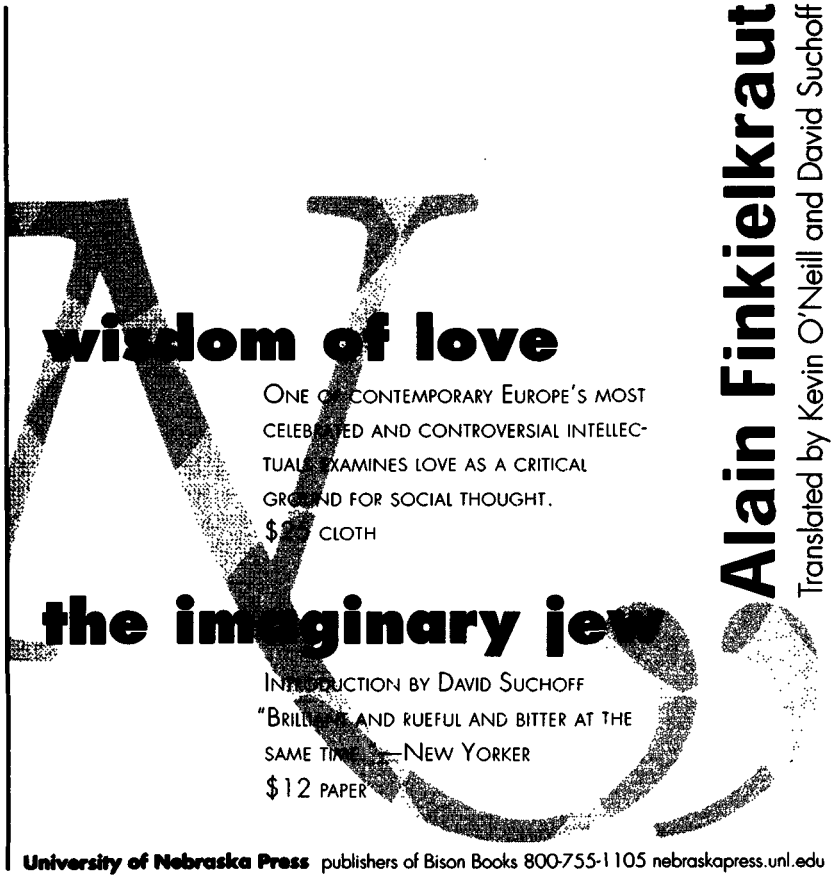
By contrast, Mack herself remains optimistic about the role of government in reforming society and building strong families. She admits that her optimism may strike some readers as peculiar, but she attributes it in part to a professional prejudice of her own. As she says,

> you don't work in the field of family policy long before you start thinking that indeed government can do something for families—if government would only listen to *you*.

And so Mack closes her book just as Coontz does: with a wish-list of government programs. She proposes tax reforms that would make it easier for parents to stay home with young children. She would require employers to institute family-leave policies. She would regulate the content of television shows and restrict the sale of offensive recordings, video games, and magazines. She would impose a "penalty tax" on companies that violate decency standards, and would rechannel the proceeds into art, music, and sports programs in inner-city schools. She would tighten legal definitions of child abuse and neglect, and she would end unilateral divorce.

Coming from different directions, then, both Coontz and Mack share a predilection for wide-reaching government intervention, and both put a hopeful face on the possibilities for social reform. But their optimism goes deeper than that. Both authors seem to assume that families would thrive if only society would let them. In Coontz's view, families suffer when parents find themselves pitted against a culture that forces them to conform to outdated, conventional values. For Mack, families suffer when parents find themselves pitted against a culture that *scorns* conventional values.

But the actual situation may be bleaker than either of these authors supposes. What if the problem is not so much the culture outside the family as the culture of parenting itself? In her book, Mack hints at the toll the "experts" have taken on parental self-assurance, and suggests that, as parents spend more time with their children, they will regain some of their natural au-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thority. She might have pushed further on this point. For the real crisis today may lie in the number of upright, doting parents who have absorbed and internalized attitudes that doom their child-rearing efforts from the start.

In the most impeccable nuclear families, parents have allowed themselves to be convinced that, just as the sun will rise in the east, their children will engage in risky or immoral behavior and that their job as parents is merely to minimize the inevitable consequences. We can ask government not to ride roughshod over the authority of parents, and we can even work to end programs that encourage people of all ages to misbehave. But for parents who are cowed by their own children, new government programs are not the answer to what is, at heart, a crisis of self-confidence.

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Hush Baby Goblin

The New Oxford Book of Children's Verse
edited by Neil Philip
Oxford. 371 pp. $27.50

Reviewed by
J. Bottum

OF THE making of anthologies there is no end—especially in the case of Oxford University Press, which has in print nearly 200 collections entitled *The Oxford Book of. . . .* Among the most recent entries is *The New Oxford Book of Children's Verse*, edited by Neil Philip, a British compiler of over a dozen children's books. The "New" in the title apparently signifies that this volume is meant to replace Iona and Peter Opie's 1973 edition of *The Oxford Book of Children's Verse* and Donald Hall's *The Oxford Book of Children's Verse in America* (1985), although at present both older anthologies remain in print, as does an illustrated paperback edited by Edward Blishen, entitled *The Oxford Book of Poetry for Children* (1987).

It is astonishing that Oxford, with all its experience in publishing such books, should stumble as badly as it does here. The making of an anthology requires, in the first place, wide learning. But Philip, who intends "the poems in this book to speak to today's children," repudiates the burdens of scholarship, declaring that he has included no poem "simply for its historical importance." This is a risky ploy, and one which makes the book's success turn entirely on Philip's own judgment and taste; these, in the event, turn out to be regrettably untrustworthy.

Of the 200 poets represented here, half were born in the 20th century—a radical tilt away from the Victorians and Edwardians who developed and perfected the genre of children's verse. True, Philip does include some classics: William Blake's "The Tyger" (1794), Robert Browning's "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" (1855), Eugene Field's "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod" (1892). And there are a handful of nice surprises: the rarely anthologized sixteen pages of Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" (1862) and an infrequently seen pair of lyrics by the Edwardian A.E. Housman. Among living poets, Philip has also made real discoveries: Douglas Florian's "Send my spinach / Off to Spain" (1994) and Jack Prelutsky's marvelous "Mother Goblin's Lullaby" (1990):

> Go to sleep, my baby goblin,
> hushaby, my dear of dears,
> if you disobey your mother,
> she will twist your pointed ears.

But Philip's selection also manifests frequent lapses, and these are not merely reducible to the many poems he has omitted. Philip seems unwilling to accept, for example, that one reason we read poetry to children is to hand on a deposit of words and phrases, the investment of prior generations in the language. There is a purpose in putting lines like "young Lochinvar is come out of the West" in children's anthologies—and "'Twas the night before Christmas" and "what is so rare as a day in June?" and "I hear America singing" and "Under a spreading chestnut tree" and all the rest of the Victorian parlor classics, together with the most hackneyed, overquoted lines from Shakespeare and Dryden and Pope and Keats, none of which is present here. The person who is not given these references as a child will be deprived as an adult, lacking old memories around which the language can thicken.

Nor is this the only illustration of Philip's failed intuition. Another reason we read poetry to children has to do with what can only be called magic. Heavy meter and insistent rhyme are a kind of sorcery, through which words achieve unity

J. BOTTUM *is associate editor of* First Things.

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not only with their meanings but with the things they represent. To put it another way, meter and rhyme confirm children's deeply conservative desire that the world make sense in all its parts.

Philip, however, seems suspicious of heavy meter. He does give us A.A. Milne's famous stressed imitation of Latin meter—"James James / Morrison Morrison / Weatherby George Dupree"—but leaves out Milne's other rhythmic exaltations like "Roundabout and roundabout and roundabout I go" (perhaps the only successful use in English verse of the meter known technically as a paeonic dactyl). He includes some work by David McCord, but not McCord's most oddly compelling rhythm from the 1950's:

> Isabel Jones & Curabel Lee
> Lived on butter and bread and tea,
> And as to this they would both agree:
> Isabel, Curabel, Jones & Lee.

What Philip admires instead is shaped, or "concrete," poetry: verse whose printed form mimics the look of snakes slithering, or coyotes howling, or bottle-rockets exploding. Some of these selections are clever—the technique itself dates back at least to George Herbert in the 17th century—yet I do not believe they actually work as children's verse. They rely for their meaning on being seen rather than being heard, and thus offer only a thinned-out, visual imitation of the aural magic conveyed by meter and rhyme.

But the general thinning-out of which Philip is guilty extends beyond matters of form to matters of substance. Even given his skewed time-frame, where is the verse about heroes and villains, about frenzy and weeping and death? All the best children's poetry manifests an awareness of the titanic waves of emotion that mark a child's life: the wild excitement, the oceanic sadness. Lewis Carroll's verse (sparsely represented here) would consist mostly of bad puns and logic games for adults were it not that he, more than any other poet, conveys the ecstasy and madness of childhood. Kenneth Graham, the author of *The Wind in the Willows*, edited a 1916 collection of children's poems in which he wrote, mockingly but truly, that "The compiler of Obituary Verse for the delight of children could make a fine fat volume with little difficulty." But there is a *rightness* to sorrow in children's verse, as Edgar Allen Poe knew when he wrote "Annabel Lee" (1849, not here) and Robert Louis Stevenson knew in nearly all of *A Child's Garden of Verses*.

What Philip substitutes for all this is a political and social correctness so exhausted and mechanical that one could weep; even the index dutifully enumerates the race, nationality, and gender of each poet. Everything wrong with the editor's judgment and taste can be seen in his decision to include a poem like "Incident" by Countee Cullen:

> Now I was eight and very small
> And he was no whit bigger,
> And so I smiled, but he poked out
> His tongue and called me, "Nigger."
>
> I saw the whole of Baltimore
> From May until December,
> Of all the things that happened there
> That's all that I remember.

This is a powerful little piece by an early 20th-century African-American poet; but it is not a children's poem. It is, in fact, an anti-children's poem, one that exploits the form of children's verse to make, with brutal irony, a point about how a child's innocence can be poisoned by an encounter with

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racial hatred. Although it is hardly the only example in this book of Philip's seeming inability to tell the difference between poetry for children and poetry about children, it may well be the most egregious.

"Incident" resorts to the pedagogic technique of teaching a falsity in order to correct it, an inherently suspect maneuver: one immediate effect of this poem might be to give its listeners the soul-poisoning use of the word, "Nigger." But even if we succeeded in making children understand what the poem is doing, what would we have achieved? Nothing more than forever destroying—in the name of teaching the hatred of hatred—the innocence that for children makes such poetry work.

Neil Philip may be right that *The New Oxford Book of Children's Verse* is the anthology for today's children, if today's children are those who find poetry a dead or deadening thing. Parents who would have their children learn to love poetry should buy the older Oxford collections before they pass out of print.

The Fixer

Crazy Rhythm:
My Journey from Brooklyn, Jazz, and Wall Street to Nixon's White House
by Leonard Garment
Times Books. 448 pp. $27.50

Reviewed by
Andrew Ferguson

LEONARD GARMENT spent six years as a high-ranking staffer in the White House of his former law partner, Richard Nixon, from early in the first term (1968-72) to the bitter and truncated end of the second. After Nixon's decapitation, Garment resolved in 1975 to leave Washington for good and return to the practice of law in New York. But Abe Fortas, the former Supreme Court Justice and all-purpose political sachem, had other ideas. Over lunch, he tried to entice Garment into staying by offering him a job as his law partner.

"I told him I was honored, pleased, and tempted," Garment recalls, "but I had had enough."

"You'll return," Fortas said. "Washington is just too much fun."

Of course Fortas was right. Garment did return to Washington; he has been back for fifteen-plus years, practicing a specialization—"political litigation"—not widely available outside the capital city. He is a fixture—and fixer—of some standing in his adopted hometown, and now, at seventy-five, he has published a memoir, beautifully written, sharply observed, and full of gossip, humor, and charm. As is true of all books of distinction, this one will offer different things to different readers. For anyone enamored of politics, *Crazy Rhythm* is above all the story of how one man caught the political bug and never quite recovered—and never regretted not recovering.

GARMENT WAS not always a political animal. He grew up in a fractious Jewish household in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. His father, a manufacturer of ready-to-wear dresses, had come through Ellis Island from Lithuania, his mother, at thirteen, from Poland. The family's "adaptation to American surroundings," Garment writes, was "relatively orderly"; their adaptation to one another was more difficult, owing largely to the father's titanic rages and obsession with work. Around the table at dinner there were "no Joe Kennedy civic lessons, no Judge Hardy morality lectures, no talk about the great issues of the day. In point of fact there was never much talk at all."

As a budding saxophonist, young Len Garment escaped into the world of jazz. With typical self-deprecation, he writes:

> My ear was less than first-rate, and I had zero education in music theory. But I had mimetic skills, a good sound, a strong sense of time, and lots of musical energy. Through a kind of aesthetic chutzpah, the whole of my playing was better than its parts, and at times I achieved a form of inspired mediocrity.

His playing was good enough, at any rate, to bring him a brief stint in the wartime band of the great Woody Herman and the professional acquaintance of such later legends as Stan Levey and Gerry Mulligan (not to mention a fellow saxophonist named Alan Greenspan, who read Ayn Rand during breaks).

Garment discovered his vocation at Brooklyn Law School after the war. "Though my ear was not good enough to allow me to reproduce the sound of Charlie Parker, I could manage a pretty good imitation of judicial prose." By the mid-1960's, Garment was a partner in a high-toned firm, "one of a handful of Jews in my generation who squeezed through the keyhole of the tightly closed Gentile fraternity of Wall Street lawyers." It was perhaps only natural, then, that he would be drawn to Richard Nixon, another partner who considered himself an outsider to the blue-blood world.

Garment had begun to sour on his work when Nixon joined the firm. "I had that bleak midlife feeling that I was doing what I would be doing for the rest of my life. . . . Trapped." As for Nixon, after his disastrous run for governor of California in 1962, he had moved east looking for a way station and launching site for further adventures in electoral politics. Like so many enduring political friendships, theirs was built on the solid ground of mutual exploitation. Garment could walk Nixon through the intersection of Wall Street and the Eastern legal

ANDREW FERGUSON *is a senior editor at the* Weekly Standard *in Washington, D.C.*

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establishment. And Nixon, for Garment, "was an opening to a different life and the possibility of salvation."

Though Garment was a Democrat, there were no ideological qualms on either side:

> I had no strong feelings about political issues, except a general sympathy for the underdog. My real politics consisted of (a) a fervent belief in hard, focused work, and (b) a conviction that there were no solutions, only useful compromises. Nixon did violence to neither of these precepts.

The reason why, of course, was that Nixon had no fixed political ideas, either. For both men, as for most professionals in the game, politics was about something other than ideas.

It was thus not difficult for the vaguely liberal Garment to fit into the ideologically amorphous government that Nixon formed upon his election in 1968. He became a "special consultant" to the President, creating for himself a varied portfolio of mostly second-tier issues. He worked on the administration's desegregation and affirmative-action efforts, encouraged the expansion of the government's role in the arts, mollified the newly radicalized leaders of the American Indian movement, and served as a back-channel liaison with Israel—the last-named mission enabling him to tell fascinating tales here of encounters with Israeli leaders and of Henry Kissinger's Machiavellian maneuverings in the Middle East.

With the exception of his involvement with Israel, the cumulative effect of Garment's work was to move the administration to the Left of its Republican base. As it happens, he was merely reinforcing the natural tendency of all government to self-inflate when it is unchecked by a countervailing ideological restraint. The Nixon administration offered none.

This had practical consequences which Nixon would come to rue. His administration spent a great deal of energy courting the favor of people who would never be active supporters: environmentalists, civil-rights professionals, and welfare statists. But this ideological faithlessness meant that Nixon's political base, while wide, was never deep. When his political enemies began to coalesce around the issue of Watergate, there were no "Nixonites" on whose support Nixon could unfailingly rely.

Thanks to his immersion in "peripheral" issues, Garment was far from the action when Nixon, John Mitchell (another of Garment's law partners), Bob Haldeman, and others were cooking up the bouillabaisse of scandals that we know as Watergate. When it boiled over, he was brought in as the unsullied counsel to the President, in charge of what in the next decade would be called damage control. It was a hopeless cause.

By late 1973, a full eight months before Nixon left office, Garment was advising the President to resign. His account of those days, as revelation piled upon revelation, is harrowing, even claustrophobia-inducing, and his picture of Nixon being slowly consumed by his petty dissembling and sly obfuscations is one of the most intimate and reliable we are ever likely to have.

And yet there is much more to *Crazy Rhythm* than this. The memoir shows the range of an author with highly developed literary gifts. Garment writes with perfect control about the most wrenching personal tragedies (his first wife's suicide) and with broad strokes about the comic imbecilities of political life. No one who reads it will forget his account of the fate of Charlie Wick, the head of USIA under Ronald Reagan, who was caught recording his own phone calls—an illegal act in quite a few states. Garment, now Wick's attorney, advised him personally to apologize to everyone he had taped, in-

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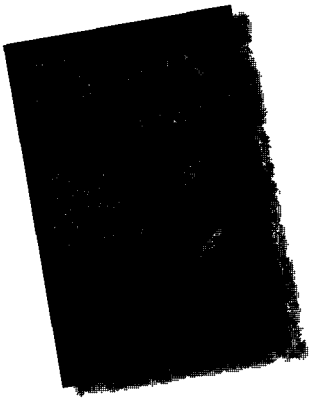

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cluding Jimmy Carter, and Wick obediently went to a phone booth to call the former President:

> After about ten minutes, Charlie still hadn't returned. I went to the phone booth to see what was happening and found Charlie on his knees in the booth: Carter wanted the two of them to pray together telephonically, and Charlie was obliging him.

"Washington is too much fun," Fortas had said. Actually, to judge by this book, not to mention by reality, the moments of fun in Washington can be few and far between. Nor has Garment's been altogether a fun life. But *Crazy Rhythm*, which has so many stories to tell, and which tells them so well, truly does offer fun of a high and engaging sort. And by providing so ample a picture of how exertion and ambition combine to make for power and success on what Garment calls "Main Chance Farm," it offers a great deal else besides.

Cri de Coeur

Out of America:
A Black Man
Confronts Africa
by Keith B. Richburg
Basic/New Republic. 257 pp. $24.00

Reviewed by
Arch Puddington

KEITH RICHBURG has written a harrowing account of his three-year tour of duty reporting for the *Washington Post* from Africa. But as the title of his book suggests, his purpose is to tell us something not only about that continent but about ours as well. For the author, as he writes, is himself "a descendant of slaves brought from Africa," and this means he saw things "a bit differently." By seeing things *more* than a bit differently, in fact, he has produced one of those rare works that change the terms of debate on a controversial subject.

When Richburg arrived at his base of operations in Nairobi in 1991, he had reason to believe that Africa was at last on the verge of *moving in a new and more hopeful* direction. The cold war had just ended, and the superpowers no longer needed to prop up corrupt potentates; the ruinous Marxist model had lost its allure, and failed statist economic strategies were being jettisoned; the 1990's, Richburg writes, were to be "Africa's 'decade of democracy,' or so I had been told."

But the story which Richburg was destined to tell was not about a decade of democracy but about a maelstrom of violence which swept across the continent: from ethnic genocide in Rwanda, to a multi-pronged civil war in Somalia, to the absurd but no less bloody struggle for power in Liberia. Over the course of his stay, Richburg saw his share of Africa's victims: corpses lying in mass graves, on roadsides, even cascading horrifyingly down a waterfall at the rate of "a body or two a minute" for days on end. On more than one occasion his own life was threatened by the omnipresent young men wielding machetes and automatic rifles with the "dried blood stains" of their most recent victims "spattered across their filthy T-shirts."

GRIPPING AS are Richburg's descriptions of widespread butchery, it is his observations on the pathology of African politics, and how that pathology intersects with our own racial perplexities, which ultimately make *Out of America* not only a provocative but an important book. Richburg has a powerful and very American sense of right and wrong, and he is especially sensitive to the cynical and manipulative use of the racial trump card in relations between Africans and Americans. The brazen exploitation of racial guilt by the thieves and murderers who are the continent's despots especially appalled him. Though they spoke to him, a fellow black, about the West's responsibility for Africa's miseries, about neocolonialism and Anglo-European imperialism, *the real root of Africa's problems*, he came to believe, lay in the boundless corruption of these very leaders.

Richburg was struck by something else in Africa as well: the unfathomable passivity of ordinary Africans in the face of their leaders' brutality. In Somalia, he found the victims of horrendous cruelty—those who had lost a spouse or a child—responding with "just a shrug and an *In-shallah*" (it is God's will). The same passivity infected the organized political opposition, wherever it could be said to exist. In places like Zaire, opponents of the regime put all their hope in an all-powerful United States, which, they insisted, could create democratic order in their country any time it chose.

To Richburg, however, it is absurd to believe that any outside power can impose order, not to mention democracy, in places where civil society has been effectively destroyed. He came to this position the hard way, having first applauded the United Nations for its "nation-building" effort in Somalia and then watched that effort go awry in a debacle that took the lives not only of nineteen U.S. Rangers but of several of his colleagues and close personal friends.

IS THERE, then, nothing the West can do? Although Richburg is skeptical about the effectiveness of arms—at least of arms ignorantly or frivolously employed—he has great respect for the power of the word. Indeed, he believes that the general

ARCH PUDDINGTON, *a regular contributor, works for Freedom House in New York. He is writing a history of Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty.*

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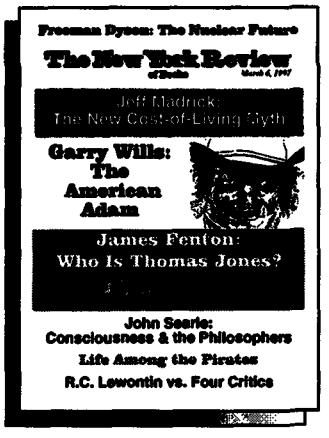

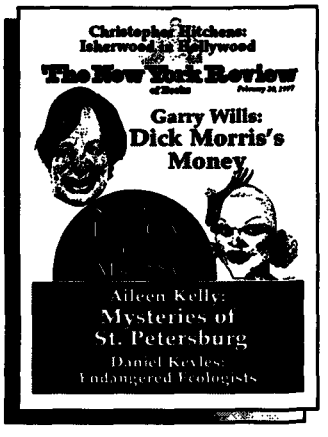

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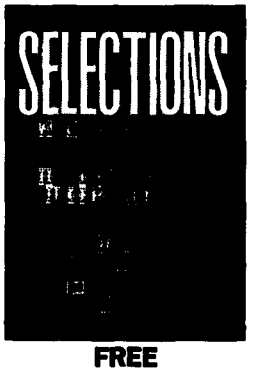

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reluctance in the West to speak truthfully about Africa's failings has done a real disservice to the people who must suffer the consequences of those failings. He also thinks it constitutes a moral disgrace, and he boldly castigates those American civil-rights leaders who waged a relentless campaign against apartheid in South Africa, who today lecture the U.S. government on its obligation to provide aid to the continent's impoverished states, and who serve up excuse after excuse for the very rulers most complicit in black Africa's tragedy.

Richburg was present at a 1993 conference in Gabon attended by leading black American civil-rights activists. Among the guests of honor, he reports, was the continent's youngest dictator, Valentine Strasser of Sierre Leone, a twenty-eight-year-old soldier who had seized power through a coup and proceeded systematically to arrest and execute officials of the previous regime. When Strasser strode into the hall, garbed in the standard-issue outfit of African strongmen—a camouflage uniform and Ray Ban sunglasses—the Americans erupted into cheering and frenzied applause. But even this "disgusting display" was nothing, Richburg writes, in comparison with the soft-pedaling of Africa's woes he heard from the visiting Americans both at the conference and in his subsequent interviews with them.

From Douglas Wilder, the first black governor of a Southern state, came the observation that "We cannot and should not expect [African governments] to undergo a metamorphosis in seconds . . . our job is not to interfere." Benjamin Chavis (now Chavis Muhammad), then-director of the NAACP, warned against attempting "to superimpose a Western standard of democracy." And Jesse Jackson heaped accolades on the ruthless Nigerian dictator Ibrahim Babangida, calling him "one of the great leader-servants of the modern world in our time." These were but three representatives, by no means the most shameless, of a class of black American political tourists who, as Richburg notes, habitually stay in five-star hotels, adorn themselves in kente cloth, and speak with pride and willful ignorance about their African heritage.

SPENDING THREE years in Africa, "watching pretty much the worst that human beings can do to one another," turned Keith Richburg into a militant supporter of the American melting pot and an equally militant opponent of Afrocentrism. "Thank God," he writes, "that I am an American," and "thank God my ancestor survived [the] voyage" which brought him to the United States as a slave:

> Talk to me about Africa and my black roots and my kinship with my African brothers, and I'll throw it back in your face, and then I'll rub your nose into the images of the rotting flesh.

Out of America is a superbly angry book, a tonic for our hypocritical times. One can only hope that Keith Richburg's *cri de coeur* is widely heard.

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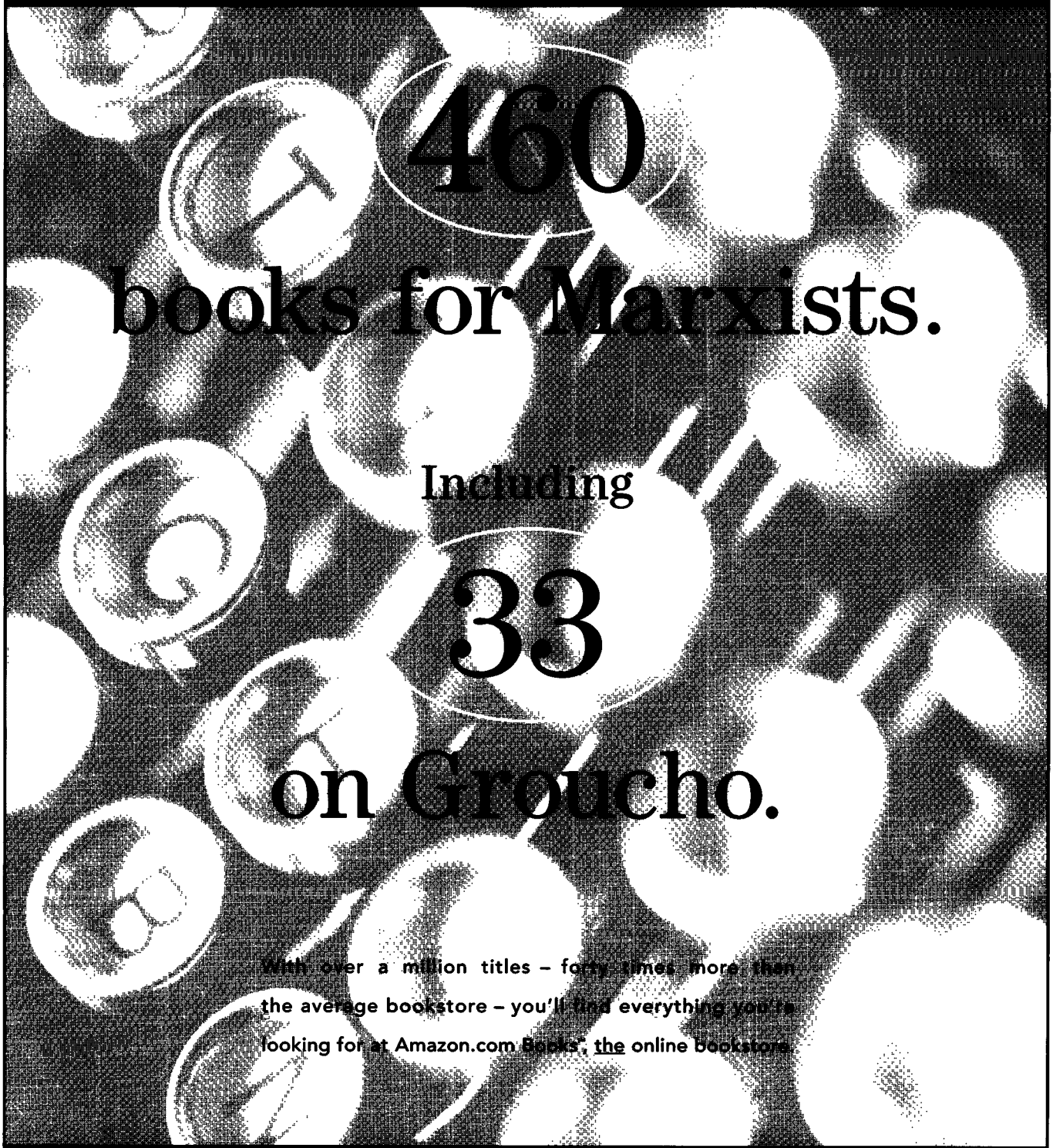
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